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Scholarly Writing

Freshman Writing Prize:

Every year, Whittier's Freshman Writing Program recognizes the most exemplary writing from the Freshman Writing Seminar course. Papers are judged blind by seminar professors and instructors on a number of qualifying factors. This year's first, second, and third place winners can be found at the end of the Scholarly Writing section.

Second Language Acquisition: Not Just for Kids Anymore

Shelley Converse-Rath

The notion of a "critical period" for language acquisition is one that has been well received and accepted as a common truth by linguistics and psychologists alike. It is the notion that children have a certain amount of time wherein they may fully learn a language to the extent that they may be deemed "native." The critical period is considered generally to be in childhood-the years before the age of twelve, when puberty begins, although experts have debated about the cutoff age, ranging from seven years old to fifteen. Despite the minor discrepancies, this theory as a whole is being questioned by a variety of studies, which conclude that the critical period may be just a myth. While children possess the advantage of a brain that has less information to influence their notions of language, several factors, including the means by which they obtain language and the less demanding range of grammatical structure and vocabulary, influence the notion that they are better at acquiring a second language.

According to Kenji Hakuta, Ellen Bialystok, and Edward Wiley in their paper, "Critical Evidence: A Test of the Critical Period Hypothesis for Second Language Acquisition," "A critical period minimally entails two characteristics: (1) high level of preparedness for learning within a specified developmental period to assure the domain is mastered by the species, and (2) lack of preparedness outside of this period (Bornstein, 1989; Columbo, 1982)." The difficulty of the Critical Period Hypothesis lies in the fact that different experts have different notions of what the "critical period" is and what "preparedness" entails. In their thesis paper "Second Language Acquisition and the Critical Period Hypothesis," Jim Hurford and Simon Kirby emphasize this difficult, stating, "The difficulty of learning after puberty is routinely attested anecdotally…It is widely believed that age effects in both are developmental in nature… this popular wisdom is being called into question. Triggering this reevaluation is evidence that some late-starting learners achieve native-like competence in a second language and evidence of age effects past the presumed closure of the window of opportunity for learning" (39).

However, there is some validity to the Critical Period Hypothesis. According to Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley,

> …There are nonetheless age- related changes in cognitive processing. Some age-related changes in cognitive processes relevant to language learning are a decreased ability to learn paired-associates (Salthouse, 1992), more difficulty encoding new …and less accuracy in recalling detail as opposed to gist (Hultsch & Dixon, 1990). Kemper (1992) points out that older adults' second-language proficiency, like their first-language proficiency, could also be affected by such factors as working-memory limitations, cognitive slowing, or attentional deficits. All these processes decline with age, and the decline is documented across the lifespan ("Critical Evidence" 6).

While these factors would certainly affect one's ability to acquire a second language, there is no strict age or "critical period" involved, merely the separation of "old" and "young."

In order to determine whether or not such a period exists, the reasons for which professionals have embraced the "critical period" must be explored. One reason professionals notice the linguistic and developmental aspects of the process of obtaining a second language: while children who learn a second language use the languages (first and second) to determine what they know about grammar, adults with a practiced comprehension of one language's grammatical rules face a larger struggle with grasping the grammar and syntax of the second language. Because children have no previous language to compare the second two, they merely absorb the language(s) presented to them. While adults study grammar analytically, concerning themselves with speaking the language only after they have mastered the technical aspects of it, children decode the "rules" of the language by listening and speaking the language, and thus have an intuitive comprehension of its grammar. As Peter Freeman says,

> But, without some direction from adults, [the children] will make mistakes. There is some conscious grammar learning involved. For instance, kids will often misuse past tense verbs, by saying things such as "I goed to the pool," or "He falled down." …They have actually learned the rule too well, and need to be taught the irregular forms of the verbs such as "went" and "fell!" ("Why Do Kids Acquire Language So Easily?" 1)

Despite grammar inconsistencies such as "falled" and "goed", Barry McLaughlin, in his research report titled, "Myths and Misconceptions About Second Language Learning: What Every Teacher Needs to Unlearn," states that, "Pronunciation is one area where the younger-is-better assumption may have validity. Research (e.g., Oyama, 1976) has found that the earlier a learner begins a second language, the more native-like the accent he or she develops" (1). Younger children learning a second language would be simultaneously learning vocabulary and sound pronunciation; therefore, the means by which they learn to pronounce words and letters would be affected, thus giving them a more native-sounding accent.

Despite these natural advantages, a key factor for a learner of a second language is exposure to the language in context; without exposure, the learner's knowledge of the language will deteriorate. This is true for speakers of first languages as well; feral children who spend the crucial years when they develop a language devoid of human contact cannot progress past the basics. Exposure in many cases may often be a motivation to learn the second language; in order to survive in the world that surrounds them, the person must adapt. McLaughlin discusses this notion in his article, asserting that children appearing as more proficient learners of a second language is largely unrelated to biological reasoning; that a child's motivation to learn a language and thus seeming more apt at the language stems from other motivations: "…Children may be more motivated than adults to learn the second language. There is probably more

incentive for the child on the playground and in school to communicate in the second language than there is for the adult on the job (where they often can get by with routine phrases and expressions) or with friends... It frequently happens that children are placed in more situations where they are forced to speak the second language than are adults" (1).

However, there is ample evidence to not only support the notion that children are not as able to pick up a second language as is perceived, but to question the Critical Period Hypothesis in and of itself. Barry McLaughlin dissects the reasons that children may be perceived to be "better" learners of language, stating, "[Consider] the criteria of language proficiency for a child and an adult. A child does not have to learn as much as an adult to achieve communicative competence. A child's constructions are shorter and simpler, and vocabulary is smaller. Hence, although it appears that the child learns more quickly than the adult, research results typically indicate that adult and adolescent learners perform better."("Myths and Misconceptions," pg. 2) While a child may be able to speak more sentences with more vocabulary, McLaughlin implies that it is relative—children require less language overall, so their mastery of language requires a smaller pool of knowledge.

McLaughlin also maintains that the preconceived perception that children are better at learning a second language can be harmful to the children themselves. While they do have the advantage of needing less language, they are also less developed in strategies to acquire and learn vocabulary and grammar. Using ESL (English as a Second Language) learners as an example, McLaughlin says that teachers should not expect the children to be "miraculous" regarding their ability to learn English as their second language, and that they should "anticipate that learning a second language is as difficult for a child as it is for an adult" ("Myths and Misconceptions," 2).

McLaughlin also appeals to cultural and developmental affects on a children's ability to learn a language, stating,

> Nor should it be assumed that children have fewer inhibitions than adults when they make mistakes [while speaking their second language.] Children are more likely to be shy and embarrassed around peers than are adults. Children from some cultural backgrounds are extremely anxious when singled out to perform in a language they are in the process of learning. Teachers should not assume that, because children supposedly learn second languages quickly, such discomfort will readily pass ("Myths and Misconceptions," 2).

And yet, children will learn language regardless, in order to communicate and thrive. Despite the fact that one's ability to learn language is a skill developed in the brain, outside factors may encourage or discourage children in learning a second language. In fact, Alene Moyer, in her book *Age, Accent and Experience in Second Language Acquisition* agrees with McLaughlin about the disparities of the "critical period," stating "...We too rarely recognize the highly individual and complex nature of the endeavor. This an especially salient issue given that [second

language acquisition] is most often an uninstructed process among immigrants to foreign lands who face harsh social and economic conditions, possibly remaining culturally isolated for years…The empirical evidence points to no specific faculty or mechanics in either the neurological or cognitive realm to explain exceptional performance in L2" (1). While Moyer focuses primarily on the adult aspect of the Critical Period Hypothesis she raises an important point that supports McLaughlin's research: one's proficiency in a second language develops in direct correlation with their motivation; in the case of an immigrant, they will learn language as it is necessary, which, in the child's case, may be more so.

Moyer brings up another important point: that achieving a level of language that is that of a native speaker requires more than just the ability to speak the language. She writes, "In a recent review of cognitive research on bilingualism, Gonzalez and Schallert (1999) confirm that language processing is a multi-level task, incorporating knowledge from structural, semantic, discursive and cultural levels of language…[that] requires adaptation on a number of complex levels beyond the neuro-cognitive realm" (*Age, Accents*…, 2). Because children often learn their second language as a result of cultural relevance or from the culture of which they find themselves submersed, cultural idiosyncrasies are often included in a child's comprehension of a language.

And yet, according to McLaughlin, the ability to orally communicate seems to signal to others that a child is proficient in the language, when that is not the case. He writes, "…For school-aged children, proficiency in face-to-face communication does not imply proficiency in the more complex academic language needed to engage in many classroom activities. Cummins (1980) cites evidence from a study of 1,210 immigrant children in Canada who required much longer (approximately 5 to 7 years) to master the disembedded cognitive language required for the regular English curriculum than to master oral communicative skills" (1). While they may have some understanding of the cultural, as a result of utilizing the language as an adaptive skill, their linguistic ability remains primarily in their ability to speak it.

While there are general truths to the Critical Period Hypothesis, such as the skills that decline with age, its controversy in the field of linguistics is a result of the various factors that make the theory unable to give concrete answers and definitions. In discussing a study they performed to test the Critical Period Hypothesis, Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley state,

> [It is] controversial because of the difficulty in separating out the effects of age of immigration, length of residence, and social and linguistic backgrounds of the participants...Other researchers have argued that the evidence fails to support the interpretation that language learning potential is fundamentally changed after a critical period… Two kinds of evidence have typically been used in these challenges. The first is the identification of older learners who achieve native-like competence in the second language [and the] second is behavioral evidence that fails to reveal a qualitative change in learning outcomes at the close of a critical period ("Critical Evidence" 4).

While there is some evidence to prove that children are more proficient than adults in second language, there are several factors that allow such a conclusion to be reached. The fact that the Critical Period Hypothesis is arguable does not mean that children are not proficient learners of another language, or that they should not be taught language; the research to disprove it merely proves that adults can and do still learn language just as well as children, and informs teachers that children are still, well, children, and not masters of linguistics. There are advantages to learning language at a younger age, and advantages to learning it when older. There seems to be overwhelming evidence either way that primary factors of second language acquisition are not biological, and in fact are socially or intrinsically motivated.

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Elitist and Epistemological obstacles to Deep Ecology and Ethical Vegetarianism

Tristan Churchia

While deep ecology claims to be the final solution to environmental problems, it falls short in its conceptual framework. The ideology of the West unwittingly taints its environmental ethics, making it hard to see the global cultural consequences of the proposed global environmental solutions. Peter Singer, by assuming that all people have the means to become vegetarians, and J. Baird Callicott by supporting what is a distinctively American concept of a land ethic or deep ecology, both fall into the tendency of Western environmentalists to ascribe Western solutions on other countries without taking responsibility for the West's significant contribution to environmental problems. Ramachanda Guha points out that not only does this ensure that we will never find a global solution under this way of thinking, but it could also be potentially harmful to the rest of the world. The elitist implications in Singer and Callicott's environmental theories inhibit these hypotheses from being global solutions; although Marilyn Frye's asymmetrical power structure could solve the elitist problem, it still does not answer the underlying ideological one.

In "All Animals are Equal...or why the ethical principle on which human equality rests requires us to extend equal consideration to animals too", Peter Singer inverts the moral community by arguing that both moral agents (possessing rationality) and moral patients (possessing sentience) deserve moral consideration. Rather than viewing rationality as the basis for moral thought, Singer asserts that "the capacity for suffering [is] the vital characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration" (192).

Particularly due to the demands of industrialism and capitalism in Western societies, the mass production of animals as a food source requires that animals suffer immensely. Singer provides a utilitarian solution to this problem by asking everyone to boycott the meat industry and become vegetarians. He argues that only when people refuse to eat meat on a large scale will they alleviate animal suffering. This would reduce demand, thus decreasing the power of the meat industry: "the smaller the demand, the lower the price and the lower the profit. The lower the profit, the fewer animals that will be raised and slaughtered" (196).

Singer fails to take into account the elitist implications underlying ethical vegetarianism. Only the middle and upper classes have the means to remove meat completely from their diets; ethical vegetarianism has an economic and educational cost. To ask families already struggling to feed themselves to implement a new, expensive diet would create an entirely new brand of ethical dilemma. Thus, vegetarianism cannot necessarily be achievable for all Americans and certainly cannot be implemented as a global solution to the suffering of animals

Indeed, this criticism of Singer illuminates an even larger ethical problem. The upper classes are at an advantage in that they have the means to make correct ethical decisions. This gives them valuable ethical mobility, yet they are

simultaneously the source of the very ethical issues only they can solve, namely those caused by consumerism. Being privileged makes it very hard to see problems that may challenge that privileged status. This creates a gap of intelligibility, or at the very least, a conflict of interest. There is no incentive for a privileged person to make sacrifices in his/her consumerist tendencies when the problems they are causing remain outside their lived experience? Thus, while people of higher economic status may be able to help the environment, they may not realize they need to, or they may not want to.

J. Baird Callicott directly implies another criticism of Singer's ethical vegetarianism in "The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic". Callicott supports Aldo Leopold's "The Land Ethic", praising its more holistic approach to viewing the environment. Callicott extends the moral community's boundaries even further than Singer does by arguing that not only do animals and plants deserve moral attention, but it is also imperative that ecosystems, communities, and species receive moral consideration (236).

The main tenet of the land ethic is that "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community" (238). Further, the land ethic removes humans from their position of dominance over the biotic community; they are emphasized as being mere members of it. This requires a shift in ideology from moral humanism, a rich respect for personhood that goes above and beyond a respect for rights and choices, to humane moralism, the inclusion of species, populations etc. into the moral community (237).

The land ethic emphasizes that the good of the whole biotic community is superior to the good of a few members of it. This means that we may have to sacrifice individual human rights for the good of the biotic community. However, this does not excuse humans from treating other humans with the same respect and moral consideration as before. Instead, humans are not to treat the environment as a subordinate tool to advance personal means. Similarly, nonhumans are not accorded human rights, but still deserve to be respected (241).

This new version of morality, that is, humane moralism, presents a possible paradox. If humans are part of the natural system, the things we do, even the destructive things, are natural and are thus moral (242). Just as a lion hunting an elk is moral because it is a natural life process, the capacity to expand, invent, and study is a natural part of human life. However, this natural process becomes immoral when it leads to the destruction of our natural habitat because doing anything that could compromise our survival is unnatural and immoral. Callicott points out "...we are moral beings not in spite of, but in accordance with, nature" (242).

Callicott criticizes Singer's individualistic approach to an environmental ethic. Singer reduces the issue to being primarily between humans and animals. He fails to look at the entire biotic community, not realizing that there is a delicate balance and relationship between the organisms and systems that make up the biotic community. Further, by focusing only on this one issue, he places more importance on it than on it than any other environmental issue; Callicott argues that no one part of the biotic community should be placed above any other part.

While Callicott criticizes Singer for being too individualistic, Ramachandra Guha criticizes Callicott for taking a distinctly Western perspective to the problem. Similar to ethical vegetarianism, the land ethic, or deep ecology, exhibits elitism by taking a uniquely American, and thus capitalist, approach to solving environmental problems. Guha argues that this Western perspective makes deep ecology unhelpful for third world countries.

In "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: a Third World Critique", Guha points out the flaws in four of the main doctrines of deep ecology. He begins by critiquing the assumption that anthropocentrism, or human centered ethics, is at the root of the mistreatment of the environment. He argues that anthropocentrism does not explain domination over the environment for many countries other than the U.S, so it is an unfair analysis of global environmental issues (255).

Guha moves on to illustrate the flaws behind the American obsession with preserving and restoring valuable lands. While the national park system is America's pride and joy, an attempt to apply the concept of a national park system to third world countries could be devastating to the people whose homes would be misplaced. Guha also shows that the park system is a capitalist concept enjoyed primarily by upper class Americans and the "urban elite" (259) of third world countries.

Guha also condemns the tendency to claim that deep ecology takes after such Eastern philosophies/religions as Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, and argues that claiming to do so does not necessarily make deep ecology a globally acceptable solution (254). Though deep ecology may represent similar aspects of these Eastern philosophies, it is still deeply rooted in Western ideology. Guha's final issue with deep ecology is that it assumes that it is the "leading edge of the environmental movement"; that is, it assumes it has all the answers to environmental problems because it is progressive (255).

These problems seem to suggest that the environmental crisis goes beyond the need to view the environment more holistically, as Callicott originally thought. At the very least, environmental ethics need to evolve out of a deep understanding of the cultural context in which they are being formed. The ideology of the West has incredible influence over the rest of the world, but Western society is largely unaware of its ability to affect change, whether good or bad. The main problem arises in that the West is not necessarily able to realize or understand that what it values as important can be destructive to itself and the rest of the world. This epistemological problem is analogous to the one of people of privileged status, as previously mentioned; ethical vegetarianism provides a microcosm of the larger problem of Western ideology influencing environmental change.

Marilyn Frye proposes a potential objection to the issue of elitism in ethical vegetarianism, and the larger problem of Western power in affecting environmental change. In "White Woman Feminist", Frye argues that only an asymmetrical re-ordering of power will end racism. She suggests that minority women should increase solidarity among their respective racial groups while white women "[undermine] white racial identity and [cultivate] communities

and agency among women along lines of affinity not defined by race" (126). She recognizes that white solidarity can be dangerous because white people already have far too much power economically, ideologically, and socially.

An asymmetrical reordering of responsibility analogous to Frye's restructuring of power could be just the thing to solve environmental issues. Instead of all people taking equal responsibility for fixing environmental problems, the West should take more responsibility because it is more at fault. For example, third world countries do not necessarily have the means to enact the solutions to environmental problems proposed by the West. Because the West is the primary cause of these problems, Western society should fix them. Thus, more emphasis should be placed on those who have the means to make change; indeed, they should be encouraged and expected to do take ethical action merely because they can, rather than discouraged to do so because it may appear elitist.

By applying Frye's proposed solution to racism to environmental issues, the problem of elitism in ethical vegetarianism becomes less of a concern. Elitism rests on privilege; that is, only someone with privilege could be considered elitist. Anybody who is able to afford the more expensive demands of vegetarianism is likely to come from an at least somewhat privileged background, but vegetarianism itself does not have to be viewed as a privilege. Instead, it should be seen as a duty. We, especially Americans for having caused most of the current environmental damage, have a duty to uphold the integrity of the biotic community. Thus, the shift from privilege to duty is precisely what makes the ethical mobility of upper classes non-elitist.

On an even wider scale, the West, having better access to economic, social, and technological resources, should take a more assertive role in enacting environmental change. Instead of preaching to the rest of the world what changes need to be made, the West needs to take responsibility for the toll capitalism and industrialism has taken on the environment. This means that Westerners may need to make sacrifices without necessarily expecting the rest of the world to do the same.

For instance, instead of spending money to preserve valuable lands while expecting to make a profit through the tourist industry, Americans should simply stop the outrageous growth of industrialism. America would not need to protect valuable lands if people had a rich respect for its intrinsic worth. This respect for the inherent value of nature is common in other parts of the world, especially in third world countries where people understand their reliance on nature for survival. Thus, land preservation by way of national parks is not necessary for most of the world.

Frye's asymmetrical solution solves the problem of elitism in enacting environmental change, but it does little to address the epistemological gap that hinders those of privileged status and the West as a whole from enacting truly beneficial environmental change. We cannot expect the privileged to take responsibility for what seems to be a global issue when we are not even sure that they realize their unique position of being both ethically mobile and ethically responsible.

We need a shift in ideology to overcome this epistemological difficulty, one that transforms the dominance and oppression of upper classes and the West to a deep understanding of one's true place in and duty for the environment as a whole. This is not an easy task however, for the ideology of supremacy is deeply rooted in the West. Here it seems that we must turn back to deep ecology to keep the understanding that humans are merely one aspect of the complexly organized and delicately balanced biotic community. It is up to deep ecology, then, to reform itself, to shake off the dangerous Western ideology that permeates it in order to embrace a better, more contextual understanding of what is truly good for the environment.

Two crucial factors inhibit the growth and global acceptance of environmental ethics: that the ideology of the privileged and the West are responsible and that they are painfully unaware that global environmental change hinges on the very realization of this unique ethical position. While this can be viewed as a problem of elitism, Marilyn Frye's concept of an asymmetrical power arrangement could be the solution. Still, an ideological shift from domination to respect, or even obligation, is needed before such an asymmetrical solution could be successful. However, once humans internalize the notion from deep ecology that our true place is not above, but rather a part of, the biotic community, we can develop a mutual understanding that each individual owes something to the environment, even if this something changes based on economic, social, or political means.

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Still Her Slanted Eden Keeps: The Externalization of Self in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Shannon Jaime

At the end of *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid suggests that because the Caribbean has been envisioned by so many as a romantic escape, the actual place and people appear distant and illusory. It is a world so bright and lush and vivid, so rich with life and color, that the humans who live there seem to pale in comparison. Yet in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette Cosway, an inhabitant of one of those Caribbean islands, initially sees the environment not as a prison, but as a welcome respite from the bitterness and hatred directed toward her and her family. The only way she can express—and suppress—the inner-turmoil she feels is by immersing herself in this vague and beautiful unreality. As a result, the external landscape serves as a mirror of Antoinette's internal thoughts and emotions throughout the novel. The risk of Antoinette staking her whole identity on this one place, however, is that she cannot simply adhere to Nature's recurring pattern of life and death. Unlike the scenery she loves, Antoinette is subject to the social, political, and economic forces that shape individual and human history. She longs for a sanctuary of happiness that continues to elude her, and as she grows to despise the locale that defines her very essence, the loss of connection to her familiar world becomes all the more disconcerting.

Coulibri, though a constant reminder of her family's poverty and former slave-owning status, is the only home Antoinette has ever known. At first glance, the surrounding scenery makes everything seem like a paradise on earth. Antoinette even describes their garden as resembling the Biblical garden of Eden. Yet she also describes how it has, in spite of its outward perfection, "gone wild" (Rhys 19). Although a tree of life grows among this rife, unkempt greenery, it is not the real Tree of Life, and so can offer no true immortality. In this garden, additionally, there is almost too much sweetness, too much color, too much natural splendor; the scent of something rotting permeates all that is living. As for the house itself, though it was once a great estate, it has fallen into grave disrepair. While it is a multilevel structure and still contains many beautiful things, the rooms give off a distinct air of neglect. The floors have gathered layers of dust, and silence and emptiness linger. Like her immediate surroundings, Antoinette has been sorely neglected and left to her own devices. The scornful whispers that carry on the warm wind are a constant murmuring in her mind, and, aside from Christophine, her only genuine friend and companion, no other voices penetrate the sphere of her isolation. Blossoming more and more each day into womanhood, Antoinette is indeed a vision of beauty. But like those decaying flowers in the garden, there is much amiss with her fertile loveliness. Beneath her harmless appearance, there lie deep psychological disturbances that cannot be seen with the naked eye.

After her mother marries Mr. Mason, Antoinette remains as elusive as ever. It is primarily when she observes some seemingly insignificant aspect of the landscape that we are able to comprehend her actual state of mind. This is especially evident when she returns from the wedding ceremony: "Coulibri looked

the same when I saw it again, although it was clean and tidy, no grass between the flagstones, no leaks. But it didn't feel the same" (30). Even here, standing in front of her own home, Antoinette feels no lasting sense of security. She realizes that it is no safe haven, but a thing that has changed and will continue to change as time passes. Once Mr. Mason enters her and her mother's life, she also begins to feel like a different person. She is clothed in fine silk dresses, enshrouded in the golden veil of new money, made to appear pristinely normal, but her quality of life worsens as the resentment of the former slaves builds. Later, when Antoinette must watch her house and beloved garden with its protective walls burn, a part of her dies with the estate. And after the flames are finally extinguished, there is "nothing left but blackened walls and the mounting stone" (44). These charred and crumbling foundations represent the precarious condition of Antoinette's own sanity, which may, with the right or wrong influences, either be rebuilt or destroyed forever.

Following the death of her brother and another rejection by her mother, Antoinette is sent to a convent to "recover." For a short while, hidden behind high stone walls from the mocking gazes and mean gossip of the local townspeople, she does find some small measure of peace. The convent becomes her "refuge, a place of sunshine and of death" (56). Although it is an asylum of sorts, it is also a place, like Antoinette's deepest psyche, where light and shadow, brightness and dark, often become indistinguishable from another. This calm existence is disturbed, however, after Antoinette leaves the convent to visit Mr. Mason. As she is scrutinized by Mr. Mason for his own business purposes, Antoinette once again sees that her ability to choose has been taken away: "It may have been the way he smiled, but again a feeling of dismay, sadness, loss, almost choked me" (59). In one of the most direct expressions of emotion in the book, Antoinette reveals her hopelessness and fears it will soon suffocate her. She realizes that her sanctuary is an illusion, that her future does not exist.

At the end of Antoinette's forest dream and the strangely ominous reassurance of "tomorrow morning" (61), the narrative abruptly shifts to Rochester's perspective. The sudden shift is significant because it illustrates how Antoinette's true identity, which is being constantly defined by others, must now be expressed even more so through the scenery itself. Making their way through the dripping leaves and heavy rain, the newly-wedded pair arrives at Granbois, Antoinette's last hope of happiness. All the while, Rochester takes detailed note of what he believes is a beautiful, intoxicating, somber, yet wild place. In spite of the land's soft expansiveness, he remains uneasy. The little run-down house, "perched up on wooden stilts" and "more awkward than ugly" (71), appears to recoil from the surrounding forest. The wet tropical climate, the deep endless sky, the verdant green hills, the steep ravines, the blank and furtive sea—are all unfamiliar to him and feel almost menacing. What Rochester suspects, but does not realize until it is too late, is that this landscape wholly reflects Antoinette. It too has become savage, been deserted and virtually forgotten. No one has occupied the lush, lonely space for a long time, and at the center of the fresh, untouched sweetness, a small white dwelling is slowly but surely deteriorating.

The very fact that there is something inexplicable about Granbois, and the

and the very distorted way in which Rochester tries to unravel its mystery, makes him unable to fully understand Antoinette. Though the answers are all around him, Rochester is so insecure with his English identity in this distant place that he does not truly listen to or comprehend anything Antoinette tells him. Additionally, Antoinette represents everything that Rochester thinks he is not. She is sensual, passionate, and looks at him with pleading, "long, sad, dark, alien eyes" (67). She is a river flower that blooms in the night—one that hides, he believes, a black secret at its heart. To Rochester, the sounds, illumination, and scents of Jamaica all seem unreal; yet they are as much a part of Antoinette as the appendages on her body. While immersed in this panorama, she knows, for a painfully brief span, who she is and what she loves, and even thinks to herself at one point, "This is my place and this is where I belong and this is where I wish to stay" (109).

Unfortunately for Antoinette, however, Nature is not static, and must inevitably undergo a cycle of death and rebirth. Similarly, like a dark rose blossoming at the height of midsummer, Antoinette's beauty is fleeting and will not last eternally. And while Rochester essentially tries to break Antoinette in order to relieve his own uncertainty, his cruel methods leave her more even more fragmented than before. Like so many others, he admires her external appearance but does not attempt to understand the internal experiences that have made Antoinette the way she is. The only way Antoinette can see herself, due to other people's perceptions of her, is through visual means. Because she cannot look inward and clearly convey the depth of her feeling, her point of view often comes across as vague and somewhat strange. Thus as her husband commits a careless act of infidelity, Antoinette nears the verge of collapse:

> I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate. I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it. It's just somewhere else where I have been unhappy, and all the other things are nothing to what has happened here. I hate it now like I hate you and before I die and I will show you how much I hate you. (147)

For Antoinette, Rochester has made Granbois and its tranquility another backdrop to pain and disappointment, instability and betrayal. As a result, she starts to abhor anyone and anything associated with that once-cherished place. The moment her mirror is shattered completely, Antoinette has nothing left to turn to; her slim prospect of safety and salvation is gone, and she no longer belongs anywhere. The utter separation of Antoinette's inner-self from her surroundings is what ultimately compels her to withdraw from reality.

As soon as he returns to England, Rochester locks his marionette wife away and attempts to forget she ever existed. When she wakes from her frightening dream, Antoinette finds herself imprisoned in a cold, dark, dreary attic, far from the hot yellow sun, the bright hues that have surrounded her all her life. Whatever openness and freedom she may have possessed, whatever dim ray of hope may have dispelled the shadows of her past, are lost forever. Before, when everyone near Coulibri spoke of her, laughed at her, despised her, she was

mentally trapped, but now she is physically trapped as well. She has been made a prisoner of this room and of her own mind. As she remarks with a shiver, "I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass" (180). Without any other basis on which to build her character, Antoinette must take on the name Bertha Rochester—the name her husband has given her, the name she cannot help but loathe. The red dress and the color of flame are the only things that can remind her of where she came from, and in order to return to the warm, brilliant world that exists only in her memories, she must endure a second death—not of the mind, but of the flesh—as a way of securing total and irrevocable release.

Kincaid, at conclusion of her essay, says that once masters and slaves throw off their respective yokes, both become human beings once more. Similarly, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys suggests that former oppressors also bear the burden that has passed down to them from this specific time and seemingly perfect place. If freed slaves lose their noble and exalted status, then ex-slaveholders and their children can do nothing but inherit a legacy of guilt and hate. This is undoubtedly true of Antoinette, who is so distorted by historical, political, economic, and social forces beyond her control that she can hardly relate to other people, or even know herself. She searches for happiness and love, and, above all, the shelter of constancy, yet time and time again, they continue to elude her. She loves the island for its beauty, for its blessed indifference, because it will never reject or spurn her. But although the unreal landscape serves to reflect her inner-soul, it also speaks a language that is, while intensely dreamlike and beautiful, almost too difficult to understand. Once Antoinette's ties to this physical place are severed, memory alone is not enough to sustain her identity, and the only option left to her is the finality of death.

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The Benefits of Maternal Care

Ley Ung

When mothers began to leave home for jobs and careers, issues arose over whether this act was detrimental to children. From an evolutionary standpoint, females have been caregivers for years while men hunted. By changing this role, children are inevitably affected. In today's world, households with two working parents are widespread. Parents must decide whether going to work will be best for their children. Research has proven that although placing children in day care may not cause direct harm, maternal care is much more beneficial resulting in more responsive parent-child interactions, more securely attached children, and a decrease in future emotional problems for the child.

Proponents of childcare can easily use facts and figures to prove the need for nonmaternal care in the modern world. It's obvious, parents work too much and children need somewhere to go. Therefore, day care centers are perfect institutions to drop off children. They not only allow peer interactions to occur and peer relations to develop, they also provide a learning environment. Children placed in high quality childcare, particular those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, are given a jumpstart in language development compared to similar children raised at home (Murray, 2006). This is largely due to significantly more exposure to words, declaratives, and questions every time the child spoke which encouraged language development. This brings us to another benefit in childcare: it intervenes the lives of at-risk children by exposing them to early, quality education.

Children from low-income families usually have less educated parents compared to children from high-income households. Childcare allows these low-income youths to learn vocabulary that other children in higher SES conditions are already learning at home.

Another proposed benefit to nonmaternal childcare is that mothers are able to join the workforce. Child care enables our country to support gender equality. Because mothers can leave children in the hands of day care centers, they are able to work longer hours, make more money, and climb higher up their career ladder. In Sandra Scarr's article American Child Care Today (1998), she notes that family-friendly policies in Nordic countries impose on gender equality. Because they grant "paid, job-guaranteed maternity and parental leaves, child allowances to supplement family income, and part-time work for mothers when their children are young," less women are competing in the workforce (Scarr, 1998, p.101). Childless females make 98 % of what men make compared to all females in general who only make 77% (Scarr, 1998, p.101). There are much more career opportunities open to childless women. Childcare centers are supposed to help this dilemma by giving mother's that extra support to level the career playing field.

Childcare centers seem like the perfect answer to the dilemma parents face in today's society but these "benefits" do not keep in mind the well being of the institutionalized child. Just like Scarr defined, childcare has two main purposes:

mothers' employment and children's development (Scarr, 1998, p. 97). Contrary to what many believe, childcare does much less in children's development than many perceive.

The argument that childcare provides for a learning environment where children are more exposed to language is largely due to the study, The Language Environment of Toddlers in Center-based Care versus Home Settings (2006). This study, however, has a population size of only 14 toddlers. Not only is the sample size incredibly small, the study was done on a very high quality center with caregivers having either a BS or MS in child development. In a country where childcare standards are barely apparent, and rarely enforced, most children are not placed in such childcare environments (Scarr, 1998). It's often too expensive or nonexistent in their area. Even with high quality conditions, infants from high socioeconomic backgrounds benefitted more in language development in the home. In addition, cross-sectional analysis suggests that children in center care who may have better cognitive scores have worse social skill scores than children reared at home (Hickman, 2006).

Parents of all socioeconomic backgrounds consider the quality of a childcare center very important (Secret, 2005). Quality however, is not provided in most childcare settings. 75% of childcare centers could not meet the high standards according to Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Secret, 2005). In another study, only 14% of the centers surveyed met levels of process quality that were high enough to support children's development (Helburn & Howes, 1996). Even more alarming are studies that have shown that most parents choose childcare centers depending on cost and convenience instead of warm interactions with caregivers (Helburn & Howes). The second purpose of childcare is children's development yet only a few childcare centers can even deliver that kind of quality. Many more childcare centers are composed of unlicensed adults and mediocre to poor quality conditions for the child (Scarr, 1998).

The third argument that childcare calls for more gender equality in our society is even less relevant to the needs of the child. Even if childcare results in more women gaining managerial positions, it is also resulting in more insecurely attached children. Nonmaternal care has been proven to place infants at risk for insecure attachment (Barglow, Vaughn, & Molitor, 1987). It is common knowledge that securely attached infants do better in school and later on in their lives emotionally and cognitively so by placing infants in childcare, there is a possibility of contradicting the second purpose of childcare: children's development. Mothers should be placing the well being of their children over themselves.

Maternal care is decreasing in today's society and this is one of the most important factors in raising a child. Studies have shown that maternal care results in more securely attached children in not only low socioeconomic backgrounds but also low risk children as well (Barglow, Vaughn, & Molitor, 1987). In the article, *Effects of Maternal Absence Due to Employment on the Quality of Infant-Mother Attachment in a Low-Risk Sample* (1987), maternal care was compared to non-maternal care in the home and even maternal care was better. More infants

were securely attached.

Placing children in childcare strips children of quality time that they can be spending with their mother. An extensive longitudinal study of children of 1,274 mothers was conducted to see the effects of childcare on mother-child interaction. Less maternal sensitivity and less positive child engagement was a result of long hours in childcare (Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002). When mother and child spend more time together, the likelihood of factors resulting in secure attachment can occur. One of these factors is interactional synchrony which is more difficult to occur if mothers are at work for long hours. In this same study, high quality childcare was associated with a small degree of increased maternal sensitivity but as aforementioned, most childcare centers are not at high quality level.

In a study called *Nonmaternal Care in Infancy and Emotional/Behavioral Difficulties at 4 Years Old: Moderation by Family Risk Characteristics*, the type of care in infancy was compared. Nonmaternal care and maternal care was examined. 1,358 Canadian families took part in this study with children between 1 and 12 months old. This longitudinal study followed these children over 4 years. Nonmaternal care resulted in children with higher levels of emotional problems. What's more, children from low-risk families who received maternal care exhibited less physical aggression than low-risk children who received nonmaternal care. Even though it is hard to prove that nonmaternal care directly causes emotional problems, placing children in the care of those other than the mother has a high possibility of it occurring. There is, indeed, a risk factor in placing children in childcare.

In addition, studies have also shown that infants were more stressed in full-day childcare settings (Watamura, Donzella, & Alwin, 2003). Researchers measured the amount of Cortisol production in infant's saliva. Infants in full-day childcare settings had significantly higher production. Longer hours in day care also yields higher negative influences on children's development. Children can become more aggressive and grow up more likely to disrespect authority figures (Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002).

Still, in today's society it is difficult for mothers to stay at home to care for their children. Our economic condition calls for mothers to contribute to the family income so although it is easy to say maternal care is better, it's difficult for mother's to actually stay home to take care of their children. There is, however, an alternative. The mother-infant bond can still be made by bringing children to work with them.

In a study titled *Parenting in the Workplace* (2005), 55 businesses of various sizes allowed employees to bring children to work. Employers allowed parents to personally care for their children while performing routine job duties. For example, employees had portable cribs in their office. Businesses encountered no disadvantages in the workplace and parents were allowed to bond with their children. The main cause for worker absenteeism and tardiness is due to childcare difficulties. Childcare difficulties also induce higher stress levels, which result in stress problems (Helburn & Howes, 1996). By bringing children to work, it

decreases this stress. It eliminates the extra burden of finding a childcare center and paying for it.

Due to the continuing increase of mother's joining the workforce, there is an obvious need for nonmaternal care options. However, childcare centers should not be the only option that parent's consider. Bringing children to work should be an option employers should consider because it would allow parents to care for their children without taking time off or coming to work late. If placing children in childcare is the only option, parents should strongly consider quality over price because only quality centers have resulted in any positive developments in children. Public policymakers should consider higher standards in licensing child care centers. Many children are forced into these facilities because of the state of our economy. Educating parents about the importance of quality parent-child interaction can counterbalance the negative influences from childcare. They should also decrease, as much as possible, hours their children spend in daycare centers. The best way to raise a child is through quality maternal care but in our times, the best way is to increase involvement in children's lives as much as possible.

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Transforming Images in "Lycidas"

Sarah Miranda

How a person communicates sorrow, anger, and confusion following a death can take on a variety of forms, from physical emotions such as crying, to more artistic forms of expression including painting and writing. And it is through poetry that many writers have been able to express not only their sorrow, but the sorrow of their audiences. The tradition of the pastoral elegy arises from the ancient Greek and Romans as a form of expression combining the traditional song of lamentation of the elegy[1] and undertones of nature and the life of the shepherd present in the pastoral. Such lamenting sorrow and grief, with a desire to remember the deceased, is seen throughout the pastoral elegy, "Lycidas," written in 1637 by John Milton on the death of a Cambridge schoolmate. And while the desire to remember Edward King beyond his death is an obvious undertone of "Lycidas," critics have revealed other meanings within the elegy that may or may not have been Milton's original intent. Two of the more popular critiques of "Lycidas" consider its use of classical imagery and a return to the classical style of a pastoral elegy, while another regards "Lycidas" as an allegory of the Protestant Reformation occurring in Europe and England throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. On the other hand however, not all interpretations and critiques of "Lycidas" center on its traditional readings. Instead, following the Feminist Movement of the later part of the 20th century, Milton scholars have noticed a lack of the maternal in the elegy despite the close proximity of the deaths of Edward King and Sarah Milton, John Milton's mother. Some believe this lack of femininity in "Lycidas" is due to Milton's mourning over the death of his mother. Through these three critiques of "Lycidas," readers of Milton today are able to see the many ways in which classical images, the beliefs fueling the Protestant Reformation, and how "maternal mourning"[2] have impacted the pastoral elegy bewailing "a learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his Passage from *Chester* on the *Irish Seas*, 1637."[3]

In his essay "Interpreting the *Variorum*," Stanley Fish explains how individual readers interpret literature differently depending on the manner in which words are perceived and read, a process dictated by the reader's association of different meanings and contexts to a word which can then lead to multiple interpretations of passages or entire works.[4] These word interpretations stem from many different roots and birthplaces: the manner and context under which you were raised, your education growing up, and the experiences you have had. Each of these factors affects the way you understand a word, which, in turn, affects the feelings a word emits and the definition you tie to that word. Therefore, words and texts are always changing for readers because of the definitions and meanings we tie on to the words around us, and these interpretations are what help to form what Fish calls *interpretive communities*; "interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts and constituting their properties and assigning their intentions."[6] Interpretive communities then

lead to multiple interpretations and understanding of literary works large and small. Such is the case with "Lycidas;" because of Milton's unique and highly praised use of the pastoral form, since it's publication in 1637 critics have been analyzing and critiquing his pastoral elegy and possible hidden meanings behind the poem beginning first with an understanding of who Milton was.

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608 in London, England to Sarah and John Milton and lived most of his life near his birthplace in the Cheapside neighborhood of London.[6] Upon his graduation from Cambridge in 1632, Milton retired to his family home in Hammersmith where he proceeded to study on his own for five years during which time he wrote *Comus-A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, which was first preformed in 1634 and published in 1637.[7] Following the publication of Comus, Milton's other major poems published included "Lycidas" in 1638, *The Nativity Ode* in 1645 (although it was written in 1629), *Paradise Lost* in 1667-1668, and *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes* in 1671. Milton also wrote a series of shorter poems and a collection of sonnets throughout his life. Of his prose works, most well known are *Of Reformation* (1641), *Of Education* (1644), *Areopagitica* (1644), *The Second Defense of the English People* (1651), and *On Christian Doctrine* (1655). Even though Milton was reported to be completely blind by the time he was 44 years old in 1652, none of his later works were affected. While Milton's first marriage lasted from 1642-1652 when his first wife died, because of his blindness, Milton never would have been able to see the faces of his later two wives of whom he married in 1656 (until her death in 1658) and 1663; Milton's third wife survived him when he died on November 8, 1674 at the age of 66.[8]

Once a student at Cambridge University himself, Milton was deeply affected by the death of his schoolfellow Edward King in 1637. Even though he was within sight of the coast of North Wales, King remained on a quickly sinking boat; instead of scrambling for safety like his fellow passengers, King died kneeling in prayer. In awe of his steadfast faith and fearlessness, King's friends complied a small quarto volume of poetry as an elegy for King, a lamentation for the dead originating from the elegiac meter of the Greek and Latin poets.[9] Through this tradition, Milton was able to not only come to terms with his sorrow over the death of his dear classmate, but he was also able to memorialize and bring King back to life in remembering his accomplishments. And as a pastoral elegy, Milton celebrates King through the image of the rural life of the shepherd Lycidas, following the seven characteristics of the pastoral tradition:[10] an invocation to the muse; a call to mourners; a lament on finite life; the pathetic fallacy; the mourning of mythological figures; the procession of mourners and a catalogue of flowers; and, an apotheosis of the dead shepherd.[11]

"Like the classical writers before him, Milton begins by stating the reasons for writing. A shepherd had died, a shepherd who had sung his songs, a young shepherd who had not come to maturity."[12] So starts Marjorie Hope Nicolson's traditional classical reading "Lycidas;" working her way from the beginning to the end, Nicholson analyzes Milton's use of the classical pastoral format in his elegy of King and the manner in which he follows and improves on the Greek and

Roman poetic form. The speaker in "Lycidas" is left behind to mourn the death of the shepherd Lycidas (who like King has drowned) and to help the world remember him now that he has passed on. As a shepherd himself, the speaker assumes the duty of singing for Lycidas and gathering leaves and plants to weave into wreaths as signs of triumph and lament for Lycidas, following the historical tradition:[13]

> Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more
> Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never-sear,
> I com to pluck your Berries harsh and crude…
> Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
> Compels me to disturb your season due:
> For Lycidas is dead, dead, ere his prime
> Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
> Who would not sing for Lycidas? (Ln 1-3; 6-10)[14]

Flowers and nature are the first images in "Lycidas;" the subject to whom the poem is addressed is not mentioned until the eighth line. But coming out of the natural world of the shepherd, such an opening image is not unheard of, for like the flowers and the berries, Lycidas has been plucked too soon. This image of being plucked before the right time becomes integrated in the shepherd's mourning for Lycidas, for with this start of the elegy, we are presented with the shepherd's problem, his companion has died and is no longer able to sing. And if Lycidas is unable to sing after his death, who will be there to mourn him through song? Thus, the shepherd-speaker takes up the task to mourn his beloved friend and Milton's speaker begins his journey through the pastoral elegy, launching off with an invocation to the Muses.

Emerging from classical mythology, the Muses are goddesses presiding over and inspiring the arts, poetry, music, and learning.[15] Traditionally the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (memory),[16] poets often call out to the Muses for inspiration and guidance in their literary journeys and aspirations. The elegy's speaker-shepherd calls out to the Muses for guidance in his struggle to memorialize Lycidas in his death; like many of the poets and shepherd-singers before him, he sings for assistance through flattery and a desire to lay someone to proper rest. This invocation to the Muse is also traditionally seen as a prologue to the pastoral elegy; because it is at the start of the poem, in calling to the Muses for inspiration the speaker also reveals the subject and occasion for the elegy. The same is done in "Lycidas;" as the shepherd-speaker calls for support from the Muses that he may know what to say, he also reveals how Lycidas has drowned and must be memorialized.

In the first section of the poem, we learn how the speaker and Lycidas had been friends for quite a long time, just as were Milton and King. King and Milton attended Christ's College at Cambridge University; they studied together late into the night and worked harder and longer than many of their classmates, although that is not to say they didn't enjoy themselves while at university for

they too indulged in extracurricular school activities.[17] And throughout lines 27-36 of "Lycidas," this friendship between King and Milton is mirrored when the shepherd speaks of the times he and Lycidas shared, of the dances they attended and they mythical gods and figures whom they associate with. Immediately however, in lines 37-38 there is a distinct and heavy change in tone: "But O the heavy change, now thou art gon,/ Now thou art gon, and never must return!" This volta heralds in the second conventional aspect of the pastoral elegy: the lament of the fallen shepherd. And yet, Milton intertwines his lament for Lycidas with yet another aspect of the pastoral: the pathetic fallacy. With the pathetic fallacy, nature mourns for the fallen soul; just as a human might mourn, so too does nature.[18] Birds often stop singing, foliage and plants begin to wilt; the very emotions someone close to the fallen shepherd might feel, nature exhibits in its own way:

> Thee Shepherd, thee the Woods, and desert Caves,
> With wilde Thyme and gadding Vine o'regrown,
> And all their echoes mourn.
> The Willows, and the Hazle Copses green,
> Shall now no more be seen,
> Fanning their joyous Leaves to thy soft layes. (Ln 39-44)

The shepherd speaker and nature together are mourning the loss of Lycidas; neither one can imagine a happy world without him tending to his sheep and singing in the fields. The thyme and vines mourn, while leaves fall from the trees just as they do in winter, which itself often symbolizes death. In his mourning, the shepherd-speaker cannot understand how Lycidas could lose his life when he was still so young with so much to offer; he struggles to understand how a higher power could let such a life be lost. And in following the classical model of the pastoral elegy, Milton's shepherd-speaker cries out not to the Christian God, but to literature's heavenly mythological personages:

> Where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep
> Clos'd o're the head of your lov'd *Lycidas*?
> Where your old *Bards*, the famous *Druids* ly
> Nor on the shaggy top of *Mona* High,
> Nor yet where *Deva* spreads her wisard stream:
> Aye me, I fondly dream!
> Had ye bin there—for what could that have don? (Ln 50-58)

The speaker criticizes nature for not being more aware; for not being in the right place, at the right time when Lycidas was drowning. The shepherd criticizes the Nymphs, pondering where they could have been. Their entire livelihood is out on the water, why were they not there to save him from being pulled under the waves and deeper into the currents? This criticism of the Nymphs and other water figures of the Irish Sea begins the third manifestation of the pastoral elegy : the mourning

of mythological figures.

Just as the Nymphs did nothing to save the life of Lycidas, the shepherd-speaker is reminded of another shepherd in ancient mythology whose life came to a watery end, that of Orpheus, the son of the Muse, Calliope. Orpheus was "the founder of music and poetry, who could charm stones and trees, and wild animals with his lyre, [and] was killed by the enraged Bacchantes whose rites he had dared to watch, [was] torn to pieces, and his dismembered body thrown into the Hebrus River."[19] Calliope in this way acted just as the Nymphs had; each neglected their duties to watch out over those whom either they loved or where in their realm. Orpheus tried to watch something that was not meant for his own eyes, and while Lycidas did not watch a rite which was not meant for him, the death of both of these figures had profound effects on those around them. In mourning now of both Lycidas and Orpheus, the speaker attempts to further understand the circle of life and death, and why death can come at such unexpected times: "the mood has deepened and become increasingly somber, as Milton's subconscious reflections upon his own life become more and more involved with the life and death of his subject. The death of youth is always shocking, and accidental death most unbearable of all."[20] Both the deaths of Lycidas and Edward King were unexpected and each of their accidents took away their young lives, and as Nicolson comments, accidental deaths, unexpected deaths, are always hard to understand. The shepherd-speaker's struggle with Lycidas' death pours off the page. Lycidas was young; he always worked his hardest and had so much to offer. And yet he loses his life while there are other shepherds who neglect their duties and live lives of pleasure instead. And while the shepherd-speaker may not be wishing another shepherd had drowned, he is questioning the gods and their decisions about life and death:

> But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
> And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
> Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears
> And slits the thin-spun life. But not the praise
> Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears:
> Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil… (Ln 73-78)

Marjorie Hope Nicolson explains how this passage's importance if often overlooked by critics: "the shears that cut the thread of life belonged to the Fates…We think of the Fates as some of us have seen them among the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum…marble, calm, and just, with an immense passivity. What has Milton done? He has deliberately transferred the scissors of the Fates to one of a very different trio—the Furies…Avenging deities, they sought a culprit throughout the world and found him, bringing vengeance upon him."[21] Such an intermingling of ancient mythology could be a possible reason for the death of Lycidas. Lycidas had tried to achieve fame while he as still mortal, a task which seems be a crime as implied by Phoebus' whispers. Because of such a desire, it would make sense to combine the mythology behind the Fates

and the Furies; for while the Fates cut the string of life, the Furies search out their victim from a desire for vengeance. In what originally began as a mourning of Orpheus has quickly turned into a philosophical contemplation on the reasons for death, and why sometimes death comes too quickly to the young and the shepherd-speaker is able to acknowledge possible reasons for why death can take the life of the young.

In her "Analysis of Lycidas," Nicolson writes that the pathetic fallacy and the lament of the shepherd and other classical figures constitues the first part of "Lycidas" whereas the second section of the elegy is ushered in with the "procession of mourners."[22] As exemplified earlier, the fifth element of the pastoral elegy consists of two parts, the procession of mourners and the catalogue of flowers. In "Lycidas," the procession of mourners begins in line 85 and continues on until about line 131. The first part of the procession includes a description of the classical figures who were present during the time of Lycidas' death, and likewise then, at the death of Edward King:

> The first lines of Part II might have been written by any of the classical poets. Neptune, god of the sea, sends his herald, who is joined by Hippotades, god of winds, both of whom declare that there was no storm when Edward King's ship when down. Indeed, it was so clam that Panope and her sisters, the fifty daughters of Nereus, were playing on the waves. To the pagan mind, there could have been no explanation other than that the ship had been build during an eclipse, a time when omens are inauspicious…[23]

The wind was calm, and for all natural reasons, no ship should have sunk that day, and yet one did. Even the gods in heaven acknowledge that for no logical reason the ship sunk to the bottom of the sea, and yet it did. The only way for this accident to be logical for the ancient community, would have been for the ship builders to have broken a socially acknowledged code while initially building the ship; instead of waiting, the ship builders most likely build the vessel during an eclipse, cursing it for future generations. For the pagan community, superstitions about phases of the moon and sun would have been enough to explain such a catastrophe, but lines 103-131 reflect the beliefs of Milton's protestant community. Last to come and last to leave in the procession was "The Pilot of the *Galilean* lake" with his "Two massy Keyes."[24] The "Pilot of the *Galilean* lake" is St. Peter, a discipline of Jesus Christ to whom Christ gave the keys to open and shut the gates of Heaven.[25] Likewise, it was the same St. Peter mentioned in this passage as wrote 1 Peter, a New Testament epistle to the church directing the church leaders on how to conduct themselves and be an example to those around them who are new (and old) in their faith. Such a message from St. Peter would have been known by Milton's colleagues at Christ's College and would have created a stark contrast to the images of the bad shepherds, or poor theological students, in lines 116-131. Flocks are going unfed as their shepherds care only about their own enrichment; worse yet, as the flocks are neglected by their shepherds, they are at risk to falling prey to the "grim Woolf" (Ln 128). The

"woolf" here represents the false clergy who enter the Church with malicious intent. And with this representation of the church, we reach the end of the procession of mourners.

With the return of the Sicilian Muse in line 133, the catalogue of flowers completes the fifth aspect of the pastoral elegy in "Lycidas." "Milton naturally emphasize flowers that seem to mourn: 'every flower that sad embroidery wears'; 'the rathe primrose that forsaken dies'; 'the pansy freaked with jet.' The amaranth sheds its beauty, the cowslips hang their pensive heads, and 'daffadillies fill their cups with tears.' Again…death in Nature reflects the death of the shepherd."[26] The speaker mentions flowers speaking in low whispers near gushing brooks and flowers traditionally seen at funerals.[27] The flowers however, also serve a purpose. Every flower mentioned in lines 133-150 is "to strew the Lauret Herse where Lycid lies" (Ln 151). And yet, where Lycidas is buried is not a physical location: his body was never recovered from the sea that took his life; instead, the flowers shall be thrown out to sea with only the waves and tides to bring Lycidas his flowers.

Concluding "Lycidas" are the sixth and seventh aspects of the pastoral elegy in its classical format: the apotheosis of the lost shepherd and a conclusion of thoughts. To be apotheosized is to be immortalized among the gods, and in this sense, at the conclusion of "Lycidas," Lycidas' spirit has moved onward to be with the gods and mourning for him is no longer necessary:[28] "weep no more, woful Shepherds weep no more,/ For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead" (Ln 166). Instead of being sunk low into the ocean now, Lycidas is "mounted high" (Ln 172); he is now alive again and in heavenly company; "the Christian soul has ascended into Heaven, where, as in Revelation, he hears the inexpressible 'nuptial song,' the marriage supper of the Lamb…We hear the echo of Revelation 7:17, when 'the Lamb shall be their shepherd…and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.' "[29] While he was treasured on Earth, Lycidas is now at the marriage supper of God, and while those on remaining on Earth will surely miss him, they will see him again when they enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus, in the apotheosis of Lycidas, the shepherd-speaker is able to reach a peaceful conclusion and achieve rest concerning the fate of his dear friend:

> In solemn troops, and sweet Societies
> That sing, and singing in their glory move,
> And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
> Now Lycidas the shepherds weep no more,
> Hence forth thou art the Genious of the shore,
> In thy large recompense, and shalt be good,
> To all that wander in that perilous flood. (Ln 179-185)

While Milton is praised with his use of the classical pastoral elegy and its form, it is interesting to see Milton inclusion of Christian religious images. With the appearance of St. Peter in the procession of mourners and Lycidas' final end in Heaven, Milton may have been treating his Christian images as symbols of

the ancient Greek and Roman religions. It was not uncommon during the first centuries, for conquering nations to relate their own religious figures to their new lands in hopes of creating alliances between the two people. And even if this was not Milton's' intent, the intermingling of pagan and Christian thought unifies "Lycidas" as a whole. "So we end, as the shepherds cease their lament. Drowned though he was, their friend had not died in vain…Pagan and Christian combine for all of us must 'wander in that perilous flood,' the dangers of the world each of us must encounter on our journey through life. The song of the shepherd, with its antiphonal mourning and triumph, is over."[30]

In literary theory and criticism, new historicism is "the study of literary works within their historical and political contexts."[31] In a tradition made popular by critics such as Stephen Greenblatt, new historicism looks to find meaning in a literary work based off of the political and social movements occurring during its author's lifetime. When looking at "Lycidas," a new historicist is not interested in the classical images of mythology as Nicolson was, but instead, the new historicist critic is interested in the social and political theories of the 1630s. Thus, critics focus on how in the 1630s Milton graduated from Cambridge College and focus furthermore on the religious political movements of the 17th century.

While Milton and the entire Cambridge community were mourning the premature death of Edward King, events occurring in England and across Europe were also stirring their thoughts and notions about religion and what the Church should be. Ignited by Martin Luther's posting of *The 95 Theses* on a church door in Whittenberg in 1517,[32] the Protestant Reformation split the (mostly) unified Christian Church into not just two sects between the Protestant Church and the Roman Catholic Church, but also split the Protestant Church on ideologies and beliefs about what the Church should be and the roles of the Church elders. And while in 1637, the Church of England was considered part of the larger Protestant church, it maintained an ecclesiastical hierarchy similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church, which Milton sand his Reformed colleagues saw to be highly corrupted. In order to see the true Word of God, Milton and the Reformers strongly believed the laity should vote for their own Church leaders as was done in the early Church, for this way Church leaders would be held accountable for their actions.[33] In addition, Milton and the Reformers saw the role of the minister and other church leaders as guides to the Church who should encourage their congregations to read the Bible on their own; "truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetuall progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretick in the truth; and if he beleeve things only because his Pastor sayes so, or the Assembly so determins, without knowing other reason, through his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his heresie."[34] Because of his experiences at Christ's College and Edward King's occupation at his death, it is not surprising the sate of the Christian Church should be a concern to Milton. And with King's pastoral calling, many new historicist critics, and religious critics as well, believe the sentiments of the Protestant Reformation are not only revealed, but alive

throughout "Lycidas."

In "Lycidas'" first line, the speaker has to "yet once more…and once more" pluck the berries and flowers before their time to remember what has passed (Ln 1). This image of repetition is not new for the Protestant Christian community. Throughout the Bible, images seen in the Old Testament reappear and manifest themselves in the New Testament: Christ was the second Adam, Jonah in the belly of the whale was a sign of Christ in the tomb for three days, and throughout the Old and New Testaments, the Lord delivers his people out of the hands of evil. And yet, this phrasing of "yet once more" should not be new to the Christian scholar. As pointed out by Matthew Prineas (through his reading of David S Berkeley), Milton may have received his inspiration for the start of "Lycidas" from the Old Testament book of Haggai: "For thus says the LORD of Hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake Heaven and Earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill up this temple with glory,' says the LORD of Hosts."[35] As is held in Christian belief, the Lord God is the ruler and maker of all things; nothing can happen apart from His command and His glory. As such, He can bring people towards Him and send people away from His eternal love. In the instance from Haggai, God Himself will cause the nations to shake (often meaning through trials and tribulations rather than an actual physical shaking of the ground). By taking Lycidas away too soon from the world, God has shaken the shepherd-speaker, but He does not do so without a purpose. Instead, through shaking the speaker's foundation and faith, God draws him nearer to His side, for the LORD of Hosts is the "Desire of All Nations."[36] Because of this allusion to a biblical text within the first line of the poem, a Christian reader would have been able to recall perhaps a Sunday sermon on the Book of Haggai and the preacher's message about coming back to God and turning to Him in times of need, even when it seems as if He is not there at all. For if we are easily shaken, we will not stand by God through our hardest times and through persecution; rather, those who remain while being shaken are those that will always remain, that is, those truly aligned with Christ will remain faithful no matter what trials may come their way.[37]

Such an emphasis on the steadfast faith would have been important to the Reformation community. Members of the Christian Church at this time were often challenged with what to believe in, especially seen with the split from the Roman Catholic Church and from the strict Church hierarchy often associated with Roman Catholicism. To be a temple of the spirit of God as a member of the laity, to have this close relationship to the Lord without a go-between, was a main point which separated the Protestant Church from the Roman Catholic Church. Without a strict Church hierarchy of priests, bishops, and cardinals (among other positions), each member of the laity is able to worship the Lord on their own and by themselves (although they were still encouraged to attend and be a member of the Church). Confessions could be made on their own without having to go to a priest for confession. Much of the conflicts revolving around Church politics were done away with, with the Protestant Reformation. And while "Lycidas"

may not appear to be an allegory of the Protestant Reformation and Reformation beliefs in England, James S. Baumlin and many of his colleagues have come to agree " 'Lycidas' is no less than a treasonous in its attack against Laudian religious politics, particularly against the Anglican Archbishop's evaluation of sacramental ritual over preaching and his distribution of benefices to church men neglectful of their pastoral duties—or, worse, to those who 'feed' their sheep with false Roman/Arminian doctrine."[38] Arminianism doctrine contains the beliefs of:

> Arminius, a theological professor at the University of Leyden, who departed from the Reformed faith in his teaching concerning five important points. He taught conditional election on the ground of foreseen faith, universal atonement, partial depravity, resistible grace, and the possibility of a lapse from grace. These views were rejected by the Synod [of Dort], and the opposite views were embodied in what is now called the Canons of Dort or the Five Articles Against the Remonstrants.[39]

Because of the beliefs held by Arminius and his followers, the Reformation leaders denounced those churches and leaders who supported such catechism and for such activities, Milton could not respect nor support Archbishop Laud, for while the Archbishop was a leader in the Anglican Church of England, he did not follow the Church rules nor act as a proper Church leader should.

When speaking of the "sacramental ritual over preaching and his distribution of benefices to church men neglectful of their pastoral duties" Baumlin is speaking of the luxuries often given to the clergymen in the Anglican Church, men who often turned preaching into a ritual and giving benefits to those within the Church even when they weren't completing their jobs. Many leaders within the Church at this time were upset by the overlooking behavior of Archbishop William Laud of Canterbury,[40] accusing him turning his eye away from the wrongful behavior of those underneath him who taught against true scripture, instead speaking of Armenian teachings. This image of Church leaders who enriched themselves despite the needs of others is echoed in "Lycidas" through the neglectful shepherds:

> Of other care they little reck'ning make,
> Then how to scramble at the shearers feast,
> And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
> Blind mouthes! That scare themselves know how to hold
> A Sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought els the least
> That to the faithfull Herdmans art belongs! (Ln 116-122)

The shepherds in this passage care not about their flock, but the monetary and momentary benefits of being shepherds. They care about their own well-being and not about the welfare of others and cast shame upon the name of shepherd. So too, many supporters of the Protestant Reformation said the leaders of Church of England worried about their own image and well-being instead of caring for

of caring for their own flock, their congregations:

> the twenty-four bishops of the Church of England were wealthy and lordly; they sometimes lived in palaces; and they dressed in expensive and rare silks and satins even as they represented the Church. They had temporal power in the distribution of land and benefices—church livings granted often to younger sons of nobility—and they had legal power in ecclesiastical courts that operated independently of their civil counterparts.[41]

While this is not to say that all members of the Church of England hierarchy were abusing their powers, Milton firmly believed the Church and its leaders were not following the roles laid out for them in the proper manner. Instead, he saw men (for only males could be Church leaders) abusing their power, wearing elaborate clothing, and placing their needs higher than those in their parish.

Just as there are echoes of the concerns of the Protestant Reformation in the images of the threatened and shaken Church and the irresponsible clergy, echoes of the Reformation appear again in the vague, yet attention grabbing, "two-handed engine at the door/ Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more" (Ln 130-131). While it is widely agreed that St. Peter, "the Pilot of the Galilean lake," is wielding the "two-handed engine," the actual "engine" itself is widely debated among the Christian community. It is often believed the "two-handed engine" refered to are St. Peter's keys of salvation and damnation; the golden key of salvation held in his right hand and the iron key of damnation held in his left:[42] " 'Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world…Then he will say to those on the left, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"[43] In Matthew, the key of salvation ushers believers into Heaven and eternal life while the key of damnation ushers in sinners into eternal damnation with Satan. Yet, as J. Milton French questions in his article "Milton's Two-Handed Engine," is one actually able to smite with keys?[44] In understanding that God Himself gave Peter the keys in the first place, and that God, throughout the Old and New Testaments has been known to smite with some unusual objects, it is not unreasonable that the Lord would smite the world through a set of keys. With the set of two keys, one in each hand, the keys then are literally a "two-handed engine." And once God has smote a people, he does not need to smite them again, "the blow is fatal. No victims" escape.[45] Likewise, there are others who would like to believe the "two-handed engine" to be a proverbial sword or axe as mentioned in Revelation 1:16:[46] "He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength."[47] While this biblical reference of the two-edged sword comes out of the book of Revelation concerning the judgment of the world and the creation of a new Heaven and a new Earth, what is important is that the sword comes forth from the Son of God, mentioned earlier in Revelation 1:13. And so while God does work through Peter, it is probable that St. Peter in lines 113-131 of "Lycidas" is prophesying about the

work which Christ is to fulfill in the future concerning our judgment and entrance into heaven, for in the Christian Church, prophesy is just as important as God's promises and should be remembered for they often tell of times of prosperity and hardship to come.

While in the traditional classical interpretation, the images and themes in "Lycidas" are supported through ancient Greek and Roman mythology and literary tradition, in a Protestant reading of Milton's "Lycidas" biblical scripture and the beliefs of the Protestant Reformation are the guiding support of the pastoral elegy. While readers and critics may not be able to use the pastoral in the classical sense of a style of poetry, religious pastoral images can be seen throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the Christian faith, the term "pastoral" is often used to describe the relationship between a pastor and his congregation; just like a traditional shepherd, he tends and cares for his flock, preaching to them each Sunday and attending to their needs as a scriptural people.[48] Just as Christ was seen as a shepherd to the entire Christian church, pastors should emulate the behavior of Jesus and care for their congregation:

> The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.[49]

If the Christian clergy are fulfilling their roles properly and faithfully, they and their congregations will be able to stand against trials and tribulations against the Church, which brings "Lycidas" full circle back to it's opening line of "yet once more." For if the Christian church is being preached the true and faithful word of God, they will be able to stand and remain when God sends trials and shakes the foundations of the Earth, bringing us back once again to Haggai 2:6-7 and Hebrews 12:27 and as is seen through the heretical behavior of Archbishop Laud and other Church leaders in England. Those congregations with church leaders whose actions are ignored and who preach heretical sermons would not have prepared their flocks for the temptations and troubles of the world; without the pure preaching of the gospel, they might not be able to stand against the judgment prophesied in Haggai 2 and observed in "Lycidas."

The pure preaching of the gospel was a large factor in the unifying beliefs of those supporting the Protestant Reformation. With the pure preaching of the Bible, congregations would be taught straight from Scripture each Sunday, but the only way to know if a preacher was being truthful and faithful in his preaching would be for the congregation, for each church member, to reach the bible on their own. This practice of the individual having daily devotions and time spent reading the Word of God brought distinction to the churches of the Protestant Reformation. In reading the Holy Scriptures on your own, you are able to build

a personal relationship with God, placing your faith in Him and not in your clergymen. And this faith in God would bring you to the peace the shepherd-speaker has at the end of "Lycidas." I would like to argue that the shepherd-speaker in "Lycidas" too has religious sentiments and reads the Word on his own. And because his faith is rooted in Scripture, he is able to stand strong when his faith is tested. While the shepherd-speaker was struggling at the beginning of the poem and had his own ups and downs through the stanzas, he ends the poem in peace. Lycidas, the preacher-poet was taken in his youth, yet the speaker in "Lycidas" does not need to mourn for him any longer; he shall not be forgotten. Lycidas may not be here physically, but we are able to remember him, his memory is to live on through what he did have time to write and through the song which the shepherd-speaker has sung. The speaker in "Lycidas" is able to remain standing against the shaking of his foundation, the shaking of what he knew the world to be. The death of Lycidas shook his world, and the world of their fellow shepherds, but in the end, he is able to reach peace, knowing Lycidas is now among the heavenly host singing for eternity.

While feminism in the 21st century is often considered to revolve around women's rights and the political and social realms of the lives of women, feminist critics are also concerned about the representation of women in literature by both male and female writers.[50] Yet, as seen above, a majority of critics have focused on the representation of men in "Lycidas;" focusing either on Lycidas and the shepherd-speaker or on the allegories present in "Lycidas" of the Christian community run by the male population. And while Milton clearly states that "Lycidas" is a monody for Edward King, both Amy Boesky and Stella Revard find it hard to ignore that six months prior to the death of King, Milton was faced with the death of his mother, Sarah Milton. "Sarah Milton's death on April 3, 1637, has been scantly remarked in the literature by and about Milton. Milton mentions it in his Second Defense of the English People (1654) with no apparent effect."[51] Furthermore, motherhood is rarely written about in Milton's works, and when mother figures are mentioned, they seem to be problematic, especially to Boesky: "my concern…is to explore maternal figuration and disfiguration in *Lycidas*, suggesting that the maternal becomes a site of abjection in the elegy, a place where subjectivity is covered over or comes apart."[52] The image of the maternal being is present in "Lycidas," just not as the traditional mother figure audiences tend to look for; instead, the maternal in "Lycidas" is torn apart and cast down, seen instead in the water images, the muse Calliope, or not at all.

For Boesky, the maternal is largely found in the landscape, "in the elegy's images of moisture and nourishment, its maternal hills and valleys, in the omnipresent images of the sea, as well as in some of the poem's most pressing questions: What does it mean to create? To nourish or protect?"[53] In order for the maternal to be present in nature, the feminine and maternal figure must be both nurturing and destructive. Water provides life to the landscape which feeds both the shepherd and his flock and this has loving maternal qualities. Throughout the poem, the shepherd-speaker recalls his relationship with Lycidas, their songs and experiences together; it is even implied that they tended to the same flocks. "One

critic has observed that male friendship in this vision is mediated by the mother: 'A maternal nature established their brotherhood:' "[54] "for we were nurst upon the self-same hill/ Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill" (Ln 23-24). And when considering the allusion of the "self-same hill" as a representation of Cambridge University, Cambridge itself is a kind of mother: bringing together and nourishing the minds of its students King and Milton. And just as a mother eventually has to let go of her children, Cambridge had to say goodbye to Milton as he left his path to become a preacher and instead became a poet.[55] Thus, while water and nature enables the shepherds to grow and mature, nature too has to let them go off and survive on their own, just as a mother has to let go of her children. However, water was also destructive, stealing away the life of Lycidas, but can the maternal be both neutering and harmful?

These conflicting images of the maternal only further the support that in the mourning of his mother, Milton cannot firmly grasp hold onto those characteristics a mother traditionally holds. Such a conflicted view of the mother figure is seen in "Lycidas" through the images of Calliope and her son, Orpheus. Traditionally, Calliope is the Muse of epic poetry, and yet, even she did not do anything to preserve her son's life:

> Aye me, I fondly dream!
> Had ye been there—for what could that have done?
> What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
> The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
> Whom Universal nature did lament,
> When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
> His gory visage down the stream was sent,
> Down the swift *Hebrus* to the *Lesbian* shore. (Lines 56-63)

While critics generally agree this passage is about Orpheus, it does have something to say about his absent mother. How could a mother stand by and let her son suffer as Orpheus did: to be torn apart and beheaded, his body tossed down a flowing river. This neglect by a mother Muse provides interesting contrast to the invocation of the Muses in the second stanza of "Lycidas." Before the Muses were called to for inspiration, but what inspiration could this absent Muse provide? The speaker's anger is very clear against the Muse: " 'Milton's repeated 'the Muse herself' locates the horror of the myth, not primarily in the dismemberment of Orpheus, but in the impotence of the 'thankless' Calliope, Muse of epic, the matriarch of his ambition who demands the sacrifice of erotic pleasure but cannot prevent death.' "[56] Once again the maternal is cast in a negative light; the speaker has to not only mourn his loss in faith in the idea of "mother nature," but now he must also mourn the loss of the Muse of epic. As a poet himself, like Lycidas, it is quite possible that shepherd-speaker aspired to become an epic poet himself one day, and when reading the poem with John Milton in mind, such would have been legitimate; from a tender age, Milton worried about not being able to write anything of significance or being able to

write his epic before his death (which he did complete with the publication of *Paradise Lost*). Over and over again we are able to notice the twists and turns involving the positive and negative views of the maternal in Milton's "Lycidas," however, the reasons for these dichotomies still seem to be clouded. It is possible that the traditional role of the mother in the family may play a part in this conflicted view of the maternal and then, in part, pay a key role in the concept of "maternal mourning."

In trying to make sense of the conflict between maternal nature and the absent Calliope, Boesky comments:

> Perhaps the maternal must be so strongly suppressed in Lycidas because its loss loomed so near. Whatever else it is, then, Lycidas may at least in part be an 'Ad Matrem,' an elegy for Sarah Milton, a woman whom history and biography have reduced to a watery gleam. The turn from his mother's absence toward 'foreign parts' exemplifies the turn away that is necessarily a return, the effort to leave loss behind which reduplicates loss wherever it looks. For the mother's death—the 'yet once more' and 'once more of the elegy's opening line—is always both a rehearsal and a repetition.[57]

If this suppression of sorrow over the death of his mother should be the case, the absence of the maternal in Milton's "Lycidas" would finally have a motive behind it. And while Milton was affected by the deaths of both his mother and King, it is possible that Milton was not able to fully mourn his mother until after the death of his schoolmate. This inability to mourn over his mother properly may be attributed to the accepted social relationship ideals between mothers and sons in the 17th century.

It was Milton's father who supported him for five years after his graduation from Cambridge, supporting him financially and emotionally as he studied on his own and began on his path to be a poet. To allow your son such a luxury must not have been an easy task, especially when one considers the Milton family had other children to support. In "Ad Patrem" Milton thanks his father for many of the things he has done for him: "I will not mention a father's usual generosities, for greater things have a claim to me. It was at your expense, dear father, after I had got the mastery of the language of Romulus and the graces of Latin, and acquired the lofty speech of the magniloquent Greeks, which is fit for the lips of Jove himself."[58] And yet, of his mother, Milton writes in the *Second Defense of the English People* that when she died, he had the desire to see foreign parts: he had the desire to visit the places whose languages he studied.[59] Rarely elsewhere is his mother discussed, and this is not just in the *Second Defense*, but throughout Milton's writings. This leads me to believe that because of the social expectations concerning the relationships between mothers and their sons, Milton was unable to express his sorrow of his mother or his affection for her; and therefore, this lack of maternal mourning, this conflict between the roles of the maternal figure, would have reason behind it.

In her essay, "Lycidas," Stella P. Revard shares her own concerns about

the mixed maternal images in Milton's pastoral elegy: "the shadow of the mother's death is everywhere; the surviving son searches, but cannot find her, the feminine having been extinguished in his life. Milton's own mother Sarah had died in April 1637. A sense of helpless bereavement accompanied by a fear of death and dissolution breathes throughout Milton's monody."[60] As Boesky had, Revard too has noted the conflicted images of the feminine and maternal in "Lycidas." However, while Boesky saw the maternal present in the nurturing images of nature in the elegies earliest stanzas, Revard disagrees, arguing that maternal comfort does not make its appearance until the catalogue of flowers, "for up to now, 'Lycidas' has been a poem of masculine loss and abandonment, from which the strong feminine figures and supporting goddesses of Milton's earlier poems are absent." It is true that in Milton's earlier sonnets and in both *The Nativity Ode* and *Comus* maternal figures and feminine images were seen throughout the texts, so why then are they absent now?[61] Instead, we have nymphs who do not hear Lycidas' cries as he drowns, Calliope is of no help either, and "the pastoral mistresses — Neaera and Amaryllis — have been regretfully cast aside."[62] Such images then are able to be understood considering Revard's argument that they are due to the death of Milton's mother. The shadow of his mother's death is seen in each and every one of these images; while the feminine and maternal are present, they are shadowed by death and unhappiness. Present is maternal nature, who while she does leave Lycidas behind and cares for him no longer. Likewise, Calliope may be the mother of Orpheus, but her behavior is not that which a mother should emulate. It is only until the catalogue of flowers that the tone begins to lighten in "Lycidas" and hope begins to show its face; "although the flowers do not bring Lycidas back to life, they bestow the comfort that up to now has been missing in the poem."[63]

As mentioned earlier, Stanley Fish's *interpretive communities* are formed by the sharing of definitions associated to words which in turn affect the meanings associated with literature. Such has been seen in the three interpretations of Milton's "Lycidas" above. Because of the communities of thought the critics came out of, each group of critics has shared an understanding of the text and similarly, believed in the same information and inspirations which lead Milton to write the poem he had. While Nicolson and her fellow classical critics focus on Milton's use of classical form and mythology, looking to the use of each classical figure and their context in the pastoral elegy, Baumlin and his fellow new historicist critics base their interpretation of "Lycidas" off of the religious concerns of the Protestant Reformers of the 17th century. More important than the classical mythology in "Lycidas," Baumlin and his colleagues are concerned with how those images might stand for the major religious figures in England at the time and finding metaphors for the struggles of the Christian church were are the forefront for their concern. Likewise, Boesky and Revard were not so much concerned with the ancient past or history relevant to the 17th century England as much as they were concerned about the effects of the death of Sarah Milton on a elegy not meant to mourn her. Milton may not mention his mother often in his poetry or his prose, but that does not mean he does misses her or is unsure of how

to mourn her. For each of these three classes of critics, words and the associations those words create are dramatically different: Nicolson focused on the term classical and all the images and mythology it implied; Baumein and his colleagues narrowed in on the key term of religion and what it meant to the Christian Church of the 17th century; and finally, Boesky and Revard centered their attention on the terms feminine and maternal and how little they were represented in the pastoral elegy. And yet, each focuses on the images Milton presents as a mirror of the story of Edward King, each acknowledging the deep impact Milton felt by the death of his classmate told through the pastoral elegy "Lycidas."

Endnotes:

[1] "Elegy (n)." Oxford English Dictionary 2nd Edition 1989. 22 November 2008. www.oed.com/cgi/entry/50073086.

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Gender Identity Disorder's Harmful Effects: A Case for its Continued Inclusion in the DSM[1]

Joselynn Cruz

The diagnosis of gender identity disorder (GID) was first introduced in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorders (DSM) in 1980 (Langer, & Martin, 2004). Since that time, much debate has surrounded the issue, centering on whether it should even be considered a disorder and included in the DSM. Gender identity disorder is after all rarely diagnosed, has displayed poor interrater reliability, and seems to depend largely on cultural and outside factors (such that perceptions of the person with opposite gender feelings are, some argue, what cause the distress and not the feelings themselves) (Langer, & Martin, 2004). While these are strong arguments, they neglect to take into account the complexity of the issue, especially when it comes to understanding the distress associated with gender identity disorder and the consequences of this disorder on psychological well-being and overall development. Much research for example points to the fact that having gender identity disorder is especially detrimental to children, as it negatively affects their psychosocial functioning (Cohen-Kettenis et al., 2003; Yunger, Carver, & Perry, 2003; 2004). Other research also finds that Gender Identity Disorder shows much the same path as other disorders (Wallien, Swaab, Peggy, et al., 2007) suggesting that GID is in fact a disorder. It has also been found that Gender Identity Disorder is marked by much distress originating from feeling gender atypical (Zucker, 2006). Not having gender identity disorder in the DSM would therefore leave many people who are experiencing distress without a means of treatment, which could be argued to be unethical. Gender identity disorder must be considered a disorder because of its effects on psychological development, similarity to other forms of psychopathology, and because a plan needs to be in effect to guide and provide treatment.

Gender identity disorder is marked by "A strong and persistent cross-gender identification [and] persistent discomfort with his or her sex or sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex" (APA, 2000). It may not be diagnosed in people who are intersexed and the person diagnosed with it must display clinically significant distress, such that there is impairment in important areas of functioning. (APA, 2000).

The impairment piece of this equation is especially important in terms of psychological functioning of children. A now famous study conducted by Egan and Perry (as cited in Yunger et al., 2004) divided gender identity into five major components, each of which serve a different psychological function. The components were: membership knowledge (understanding what gender you belong to), gender contentedness, gender typicality, felt pressure for gender conformity, and intergroup bias (Yunger et al., 2004). Children who have gender identity disorder have been found to experience delays (such as in membership knowledge) as well as impairment or intensification of these dimensions (such as felt pressure for gender conformity) (Yunger et al., 2004). For example,

in a study conducted on children with gender identity disorder and controls (mean age of six), it was found that children with gender identity disorder did significantly less well on measures of gender stability than did controls (Zucker et al., 1999). Children with gender identity disorder were also far more likely to misclassify their own gender, which in turn induces subsequent lags in gender constancy acquisition. (Zucker et al.,1999). We see here that children with gender identity disorder lack knowledge of their gender, a developmental milestone that should have been reached at around the age of 2 to 3 (Zucker et al., 1999). These impairments markedly affect children's psychological and psychosocial functioning, classifying this as a disorder that should be included in the DSM.

There are other problems in children with GID besides membership knowledge. Gender contentedness, something usually established around the preschool age, is not established in children with GID, nor is felt sense of gender typicality (Carver et al., 2003). But why is establishing these things important? Well for one it has a marked effect on how these children are perceived by their peers (Carver et al., 2003). In a longitudinal study on 106 third to seventh graders which used personal and peer evaluations, it was found that children who felt gender atypical and were perceived as gender atypical by their peers consistently experienced ostracism, denial of privileges, or loss of protection by the group (Yunger et al., 2004). They were also seen by their peers and by themselves as inadequate group members (Yunger et al., 2004). Children who recognized themselves as gender atypical also declined in self esteem over time and felt increasingly more pressure for gender conformity which lead them to display many aspects of internalizing problems (Yunger et al., 2004). These internalizing behaviors caused the individuals who were gender atypical to be further disliked by the group (Yunger et al., 2004).

These kinds of results have much controversy surrounding them. On the one hand, they display that children who feel gender atypical have a host of problems, suggesting that they do in fact have a disorder. On the other hand, questions arise as to whether these problems are a result of the disorder or are socially constructed. Langer and Martin (2004) make the argument for instance that people with gender identity disorder are being pathologized for reacting against an oppressive social force that does not accept individuals who do not conform to stereotypical gender roles. While this may be true, it is beside the point. The issue of whether the distress of a disorder arises from the disorder itself or from outside forces is not an issue exclusive to gender identity disorder (Zucker, 2006). Why then, is the debate being surrounded around GID? The truth is, regardless where the distress comes from, it is significant; it is so significant in fact that some with this disorder opt for sex-reassignment surgery, which is extremely painful (Zucker, 2006). In fact, the outside forces that promote distress could be seen as further evidence that this is in fact a disorder. For example, if individuals are experiencing such distress over their gender atypical behavior, why not simply change it? Cross-gendered behavior is still extremely socially unacceptable, so the fact that someone would still behave in this manner means there must be great distress felt with gender conforming behavior (Zucker, 2006).

As Zucker (2006) puts it, " It is the marked disjunction between somatic sex and psychological gender that causes their distress and motivates such individuals to seek out treatment" (p. 544). It is not enough to argue therefore that GID is not a disorder because it is based on societal assumptions of gender conforming behavior since this does little to alleviate the distress individuals with this are experiencing.

There also a variety of ways in which gender identity disorder mimics the same characteristics of other disorders in the DSM. Research has found for instance that people with one disorder have a higher likelihood of having another disorder (in other words, of displaying comorbidity) (Wallien, et al., 2007). This was found to be true of children with gender identity disorder as well (Wallien et al., 2007). A study conducted on 142 children aged 4 to 11 who either had gender identity disorder as assessed by the DSM, or who were sub-threshold for a full GID diagnosis found that over half fulfilled DSM criteria for a disorder other than GID as well (Wallien et al., 2007). Twenty-nine percent of these children had two or more diagnoses other than GID (Wallien et al., 2007). The most common comorbid disorders were anxiety disorders (31%) followed by disruptive disorders (23%) and mood disorders (6%) (Wallien et al., 2007). These children were then compared to another clinical population (kids with ADHD), who displayed similar results (Wallien et al., 2007). This suggests that there may be an underlying mechanism that places individuals at risk for developing any kind of disorder, of which GID is one. Since GID has the same pattern than other disorders such as ADHD, it makes sense to infer that GID must be a disorder.

Comorbidity is not the only way in which GID is comparable to other disorders. In terms of demographic characteristics, GID follows much the same pattern as other disorders. In individuals with GID and males in particular, the disorder is associated with lower socioeconomic status, a non-intact family, and maternal psychopathology (Cohen-Kettenis, et al., 2003). In this way, GID seems to be associated with a set of generic risk factors for psychopathology and therefore its inclusion in the DSM makes sense.

However, the fact that these risk factors seemed to be truer for males than for females have raised questions in the eyes of the critics. Langer and Martin (2004) accurately assessed that males are diagnosed at a much higher rate than females and a possible reason for this, they argue, is that the threshold in the DSM is lower for males than for females (Langer, & Martin, 2004). Of the DSM criteria for GID they stated "…girls have to insist on wearing such clothes, but boys need only to prefer them" (Langer, & Martin, 2004, p. 8). However, a possible reason for this difference, as Zucker (2006) points out, could simply be because there is an actual sex difference in the prevalence of GID. Research does seem to point this way (Cohen-Kettenis, et al., 2003). Also, since males with GID have displayed more of the general risk factors for psychopathology than have females, it makes sense that they would have higher rates of the disorder. It could be that these generic risk factors make males more prone to GID than females. Zucker (2006) also points out that gender atypical behavior is more acceptable for females than for males so that when males display gender atypical behavior,

they experience distress much sooner than do females (which is why there are different thresholds in the DSM) (Zucker, 2006). In essence, there are differences in which males and females with GID are perceived by society, and regardless where the distress comes from (internally or externally), it hits males at much lower threshold than it does females. A gender difference in the prevalence of GID is therefore not a sufficient argument against its inclusion the DSM. We must not forget that other disorders show a gender difference as well (depression for example).

It is understood that one of the reasons for the inclusion of disorders in the DSM is to guide treatment. Treatment for gender identity disorder has been surrounded by much controversy. Langer and Martin (2004) argue that GID was introduced into the DSM at the same time that homosexuality was taken out, suggesting that GID was just another form of pathologizing homosexuality. They went on to say that since treatment for homosexuality was no longer available, people needed to create this new label of GID which did much the same thing (tried to get individuals to engage in gender typical behavior and develop a heterosexual identity) (Langer, & Martin, 2004). There are many ways in which this is just grossly inaccurate. First of all, transexualism had begun to be studied extensively in the 1960's and the first university hospital based gender identity clinic was established long before homosexuality was removed from the DSM (Zucker, 2006). The idea of a gender identity disorder therefore had been introduced long before Langer and Martin would have us believe. At the point in which GID was introduced into the DSM there was finally enough research in the area for its inclusion, and it had nothing to do with homosexuality's exclusion (Zucker, 2006). Secondly, treatment for GID, at least today, has nothing to do with homosexuality. The most widely accepted treatment for GID today involves therapy consisting of acceptance and support, self-esteem enhancement exercises, and education of children and parents (Rosenberg, 2002). Children with GID are in fact often encouraged to engage in cross-gender play and as adolescents, to explore their sexualities, whatever that may be (Rosenberg, 2002). For those who are seriously under distress, hormone therapy and surgery is given (Barrett, 2003). This is not done however, until other forms of therapy have failed and the individual has lived their life as the opposite sex for at least two years (Barrett, 2003). The idea in treatment is to attack the social components of this disorder and allow individuals to feel comfortable in their skin in the face of a society that does not accept them for who they are. This is in staunch opposition to the "treatment" given to those who were homosexual. It is also important to note that individuals with GID do not necessarily have to be homosexual (Rosenberg, 2002).

Removing GID from the DSM because it seems to have only a social component would be a huge mistake in terms of treatment. Regardless of where the distress comes from, individuals with GID need treatment that allows them to deal with the prejudices they are facing and the effects of their disorder on psychological well being. To deny the inclusion of GID in the DSM would be to deny treatment and studies have found that the kinds of treatment for GID which

I previously mentioned are highly successful (Rosenberg, 2002). Opponents of GID fail to realize that opposition to the legitimacy of this disorder does nothing to help the individuals with it. The distress experienced by these individuals is real, making any criticisms of the disorder's origin insignificant in terms of treatment.

There are many factors that go into gender identity disorder and much debate surrounding the source of distress among people with it. Opponents argue that gender identity disorder is a social construction and as such should not be included in the DSM (Langer, & Martin, 2004). However, it cannot be argued that those individuals with gender identity disorder do experience much harm. For example, individuals with GID experience a developmental lag in terms of gender constancy acquisition, have a hard time developing positive psychosocial identities, often experience comorbidity with other disorders, and are at increased risk for internalizing problems (Carver et al., 2003; Cohen-Kettenis et al., 2003; Wallien et al., 207; Yunger et al., 2004; Zucker, 2006). Failure to include GID in the DSM therefore has severe consequences for treatment. Individuals with GID need treatment of some sort, regardless of theoretical understandings of the disorder. Perhaps one day individuals who feel gender atypical won't be stigmatized and so will not experience the negative effects of GID, necessitating its removal from the DSM. Unfortunately we are not there yet and individuals with GID still experience much distress, making GID's inclusion in the DSM a necessity.

Endnotes:

[1]For research that presents the other side of this argument, please see Langer & Martin's 2004 article entitled "How dresses can make you mentally ill: Examining gender identity disorder in children."

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Getting at Truth:
Stein and Pekar's Quest to Resolve an Autobiographical Problem

Joselynn Cruz

Autobiography's place in literature is highly contested. Is autobiography fiction, non-fiction, an awkward hybrid of the two, or neither? What place does autobiography hold, and should it even be a genre available for literary criticism and theory? While autobiography is a much younger sibling of older conventions of writing, its sheer magnitude and infiltration of American culture certainly make it necessary as a subject of study. By definition autobiography is the presentation of one's own life. As such, it makes a claim to truth and asks how we get it and how we are able to see our own lives in a truthful fashion. Autobiographical authors are then plagued with the daunting task of presenting truth, or at the very least some version of it. This can be problematic for a number of reasons, most notably perhaps because of the fact that the autobiographer must pick a point at which to stop that is not the point at which their life has ended, and thus not the true ending. Another problem with getting at truth in autobiography is the fact that memories are not accurate, nor are they reliable, making it nearly impossible to reconstruct a history from them. If autobiographies can never really get at a full truth however, the autobiographer's job is to get as close to it as possible. Harvey Pekar and Gertrude Stein are both autobiographers who try to live up to this ideal. In an attempt to address the problem of truth inherent in their mode of writing, both try to reconfigure autobiography itself by presenting various angles through which their lives can be seen. Stein for example spends much of her time in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* interrogating words, sentences and meaning, to try to get at a whole picture of truth. Pekar on the other hand interrogates images and small moments in life, attempting to display the ordinary and de-fantasize his story to get at truth. The question really becomes however, do they succeed? Ultimately, even though Stein and Pekar try out innovative methods to get at truth, they fail because they still have not found a way to address the problems inherent in autobiographical writing. In so doing however, they display the never-ending quest for truth and perhaps the impossibility of achieving it.

Getting at truth in autobiography can be a problem for a variety of reasons. In an essay entitled *The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography*, Renza states "The autobiographer of necessity knows as well as writes about his past from the limiting perspective of his present self-image" (270). Herein lies one of the main problems of autobiography; namely, how do you write about your past while only having present day cognition? This can also be seen from another angle: how do you relate your story with only the limiting perspective of yourself? Renza argues in his essay that one cannot ever accurately write about ones past because it is always retrospectively endowed with meaning. This meaning didn't exist then but it does now, thus changing the way in which life history is told. I would argue that this is largely true. Autobiographers are after all story tellers and even if much of the story they are relating in their autobiography is true, it is still told to us as a story, with a beginning, middle, and at least some sort of end. It

is also told to us with an assumption that it matters. Even though both Stein and Pekar in their autobiographies tell us about ordinary events that happened in their lives, it is still told to us with a purpose. Since not all events in ones life can be recounted in an autobiography, the author must pick and choose moments, usually important ones, which frame the shaping of an identity and display to the reader a version of someone's life, although not the whole version. Even in the case of Pekar, who makes claims to writing about the ordinary, there is still an inherent purpose in it. In framing it this way however, is it the truth?

One's personal perspective is also very limiting. How one's own life is perceived to oneself never really tells the full story, as ones life is seen differently by different people. This is true about other people in the autobiographer's life, as well as people that pick up and read an autobiography. Every individual picks up this story and reads it differently, thus it is never fully true since it is endowed with our own cognitions. The act of writing autobiography itself also changes the story. "When a narrator recounts what has happened to him, the I who recounts is no longer the one that is recounted" (Renza, 276). Thus autobiography is left with a massive problem; the act of writing autobiography changes the autobiographer's life in some way. One must then write about the act of writing to get at truth, and then write about that experience, and so on. In essence, one's personal truth is so fluid that it cannot be captured before it undergoes yet another metamorphosis. One can see how autobiography is riddled with the problem of getting at truth. Stein and Pekar however find innovative ways to try and address these issues.

Stein addresses the concept of truth in a very interesting way. Unlike many autobiographies, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* is not only not written by the person the autobiography is about, but spends very little time or effort describing to the reader how Alice's life began or evolved. We are given only a chapter devoted to this while the rest of the time is spent describing Paris life, the war, artists, and most importantly Gertrude, all in a writing style devoted to the interrogation of words, sentences, and meaning. To confound this even further, it is Gertrude Stein who is writing the autobiography of Alice B. Toklas as if she were in fact Alice, while spending most of the time describing life with Gertrude. It is, in essence, Gertrude speaking as Alice speaking of Gertrude. What is the meaning of this, and how does it get at truth?

Stein does provide us some hints. If we are to accept that very little time is actually spent on Alice's life outside of Stein's, we can see how this is mostly the autobiography of Stein, or at least the autobiography of Alice and Stein's life together. It can be argued that Stein is looking at herself from various angles. Stein may be looking at herself through the imagined eye of Toklas in order to gain an exact replication of herself and thus get at truth in a way she may have never been able to do had she simply written about herself as herself. In this way, Stein addresses one of the main problems of getting at truth in autobiography: the issue of perspective. The fact that Stein writes, through the eyes of Alice B. Toklas, the story of her own life, enables her to distance her own personal bias toward her own narrative. In so doing, she forces herself to see her own life through the eyes of someone else and perhaps in that way achieves more clarity.

Does this, however, work? Unfortunately, it does not address the core issue of cognition. In writing through the eyes of someone else, Stein is still reliant on her own cognition. She must still imagine how Toklas would think since she cannot actually know how she would think. There is still in this way imagination and story-telling taking place. In fact, employing the eyes of someone else seems to complicate the matter of truth further rather than alleviate it. Instead of being confounded by simply her own memory and bias, Stein is now also confounded by the imagined memory and bias of Toklas, shrouding Stein's personal story under various layers of cognition and making it harder to unmask truth.

Stein also tries to get at truth through her writing style. In the autobiography, much time is spent saying and resaying something, only slightly changing the way in which it is said. An example of this is when Toklas describes her desire to write about the many wives of geniuses she has dined with.

> I have sat with so many. I have sat with wives who were not wives, of geniuses who were real geniuses. I have sat with real wives of geniuses who were not real geniuses. I have sat with wives of geniuses, of near geniuses, of would be geniuses, in short I have sat very often and very long with many wives and wives of many geniuses. (14)

Upon first glancing at this, there seems to be utter confusion. What Stein seems to be doing here however is providing us with all possible options. Instead of addressing the problem of picking and choosing what goes into an autobiography and the way in which it is said, she throws at us all possibilities, leaving the work up to the reader. She lets us decide which is truth, or perhaps tells us that all versions are true. In so doing, she gets closer to displaying truth than she would by simply telling us one version of what happened in one way.

Stein herself later lets us in to her seemingly mad method. "Gertrude Stein, in her work, has always been possessed by the intellectual passion for exactitude in the description of inner and outer reality" (211). In attempting to exactly replicate inner and outer reality, and thus get at truth, it makes sense that Stein would spend much time in her writing changing the way in which things are said. It is only through looking at the various angles of things that one can find truth. In presenting all these angles, Stein in a way strips meaning, and thus gets rid of the problem in autobiography of framing one's story in a certain way to get to a particular kind of truth that has meaning. This kind of truth is biased, and realizing this, Stein strips this way of telling her story and thus presents us with a much more chaotic, but much more true autobiography.

We see many examples of this in Pekar's work as well, although he is much more straightforward about it. Instead of deconstructing meaning by throwing out many possibilities to the reader, Pekar simply decides to write with the assumption that there is no meaning. He writes in essence about the mundane, the ordinary, and in that way does not have to worry about framing his story in a certain way. Much of *American Splendor* is in fact spent on describing his work at

the V.A hospital, the daily hassles he must deal with, and loneliness. Harvey Pekar is different from many autobiographers in that he makes a claim to not wanting to fictionalize any part of his world. He utterly rejects the world of fantasy, but on another level uses a comic book to do this, which is inherently fantasy based. If his plan is to show us that everything is ordinary and nothing matters and thus solve the problem within autobiographical writing of framing ones story around meaning however, he catastrophically fails.

A prime example of this is in his strip entitled "A step…out of the nest". This is perhaps the longest strip in the entire book and has a prologue as well as an epilogue, both of which stress the embrace of the ordinary. His prologue very matter of factly states "Y'kid yerself into thinking stuff matters" (50). This statement however becomes very ironic in light of the fact that he must think his life, or at least his life in this particular strip matters, since he is writing about it. The fact that Pekar frames his narrative around the message "I don't care" also only presents one version of truth. He is stuck, no matter how hard he fights against it, within an autobiographical framework in which things must have a beginning, middle, and end and also be endowed with meaning. We see this meaning peak through within this strip, although it is unclear whether Pekar intends us to see this fully or not. The reader gets many glimpses within this strip that Pekar actually cares. He wants to convey a certain image on the David Letterman show and as time draws nearer, he gets more and more nervous, not being able to sleep and claiming he does not want to be a failure (58). If his comic book is meant to display the mundane however, he fails. Being on a t.v show and as such being that close to fame is not something that is inherently normative, so how can one appear normal doing it? It is also important to note that being a failure is very ordinary and Pekar's rejection of this places him, whether he likes it or not, outside of the sphere in which he wants to write in. While he does not shy away from de-glamorizing his rise to some sort of eminence, the entire strip is obsessed with getting things right, conveying the right image, and rehearsing. When he is told finally that he will not appear on the show, his face is one of utter disillusionment (74). He goes on to have an entire fantasy about how things might have gone, displaying once again that there is a part of him and of his autobiography that is grounded on how things are perceived rather than on how things are. Thus his attempt to solve the autobiographical bias of endowing one's story with meaning fails because Pekar cannot do it. He cannot truly see his life as being unimportant.

Like Stein, Pekar also realizes that there is an issue of perspective. He realizes that simply telling his own story and relying on his own memory to convey his life does not display the whole truth. Like Stein, he also employs different mediums to resolve this issue. While Stein tries to get into Toklas' head and deconstructs language to try to understand her own life, Pekar uses the medium of a comic-book in which he is not the illustrator. It becomes very important autobiographically that Pekar does not illustrate his own comic and in fact employs not one but many different illustrators to draw his life. In so doing, he is doing the same thing Stein does; Pekar is examining his life from various

angles and various levels of cognition. In the end we are left with various levels of understanding. We get the words themselves, as written by Pekar, as well as the images, as well as the mixture of the image and the words. Whether intentionally or not, Pekar thus achieves a closer level of truth through doing this than Stein does in writing through the eyes of Toklas. Stein does not get at the core issue of cognition, since it is still her mind doing the writing, but Pekar does, as he is actually employing different minds to tell his story. If we include the film of American splendor in this discussion, we then are given many more angles with which to see his life through. In this way, Pekar alleviates the issue of personal bias in getting at truth in autobiography by presenting us with various levels of understanding.

In the end we must ask ourselves however whether what Stein and Pekar do is enough to fix the problem of truth in autobiography. Stein and Pekar both realize there is a massive problem with their mode of writing. All details can never be recounted in an autobiography, nor can they ever be accurately remembered. There is also the issue of deciding when to begin and end, as well as the limiting perspective of ones self. All of these factors amount to a distortion of the truth. Realizing this, both Stein and Pekar try to find different mediums with which to tell their story, whether its through toying with language, seeing things through others perspective, or rejecting the notion that their story must have a middle and end as well as be endowed with meaning. Do these innovative methods however, fix the problem? It seems that these things in many ways instead of alleviating the problem of truth in autobiography, present even more theoretical questions. By seeing ones life through the eyes of someone else the question is raised: whose truth matters more? The one that the individual believes to be true, or the one that is seen as true by someone else? By deconstructing meaning through presenting all possible angles one must ask: does the summation of all possibilities equal truth? There is also the fact that as soon as one finishes an autobiography a new truth is formed, bringing us back to the fact that ones autobiography can never be finished nor accurately captured until one is dead, at a time in which it is physically impossible to write autobiography. In trying so hard to get at truth both Stein and Pekar also fail in many ways to take into account emotion. We get very few moments in which we are actually able to see how Stein feels, or how Pekar fantasizes about the life that he might have had. Don't these aspects form a kind of truth as well? Perhaps the closest we can ever get to truth is by making truth subjective. While Pekar and Stein do not ultimately get at truth, they do illuminate its flexibility and in the process display the impossibility of achieving it.

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Public Propriety and Private Persuasion in *Pride and Prejudice*: The Consequence of Reserve

Mary Helen Truglia

Pride and Prejudice explores the unique question of the meaning of reserve, given the premise that the relation between a private character and public reality is at once problematic and necessary. We have a tendency in discussions of the "individual" and "society" within *Pride and Prejudice* to allegorize Elizabeth and Darcy into representatives of those respective terms. Elizabeth reveals the energy, the impulsiveness, the respect for personal merit which characterizes individualism, while Darcy, with his sense of propriety and his noble family connections, stands for "society" or the publically established social codes. If society for Jane Austen is not so much *opposed* to individuals as *composed* of them, however, there may be justification in turning such ingrained associations on their heads. After all, it is Elizabeth whose values are primarily companionable and sociable and who might fittingly stand for what Jane Austen conceives of as society, while it is Darcy whose reserve, privacy, and discretion are more demonstrative and protective of the individual.

At the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice*, before even twenty pages have passed, our disposition towards much that will follow is formed by an initial, and seemingly simple, antithesis. At the Meryton ball, the first public event of the novel, we meet two men between whom there is "a great opposition of character" (218). Charles Bingley is everything a sociable gentleman should be – lively, open, unreserved, with a pleasant countenance and an agreeable manner. He mixes well with the rest of the company, dances every dance, and soon finds himself liking, and liked by, nearly everyone in the room. "What a contrast between him and his friend!"(215). Mr. Darcy, on the other hand, is almost completely antisocial. Haughty and reserved, he declines being introduced to anyone, talks only to members of his own small party, and dances only twice. He feels not the slightest interest in any other people at the assembly, and in return is heartily disliked for it. Jane Austen never introduces characters merely to be described; nor does she ever describe a character simply because he figures in the action of the novel. Her depictions always serve thematic as well as mimetic purposes. The extended contrast shown between Darcy and Bingley is no exception; the opposition between openness, honesty, and sociability on the one hand, and reserve, delicacy, and exclusiveness on the other is not allowed to end here. Once we have expanded our notion of Darcy's social distance to include its apparent source in his snobbish regard for wealth and great connections, we can trace the same resistance at work in the "grouping" of some of the other characters.

At almost the same time that we encounter the differences between Darcy and Bingley, we are also introduced to the characters and dispositions of Bingley's sisters. Elizabeth immediately suspects that they do not possess the same open temper and sociable good nature as their brother – "their behavior at the assembly had not been calculated to please in general" (217) – and the narrator soon leaves us no doubt about it. The sisters are "proud and conceited", and though not

incapable of being agreeable when they wished to please, have become so enamored of their own beauty, wealth, and rank that they now believe themselves fully "entitled to think well of themselves, and meanly of others" (218). If this description were not in itself sufficient to suggest the association of Bingley's sisters with Darcy's own apparent brand of pride and conceit, it is certainly reinforced by later events. Once Elizabeth has taken the measure of Bingley's sisters' arrogance, she finds it easy to believe them as "charmingly group'd" (239) with Darcy in their opinions as well as in their walks. Because Darcy shows himself to be closely linked and more comfortable within the company of the Bingley sisters, both metaphorically and in this scene, physically, Elizabeth infers that he must be of a similar mindset and worldview. Elizabeth places guilt upon Darcy by "wilfully misunderstand[ing]" (242) his character based upon what she perceives of the nature of his company.

In fact, much of the animosity we feel towards Darcy in the first part of the novel is created by a form of guilt by association. We are shown the snobbishness, the shallowness, the ill-nature of the Bingley sisters; we extrapolate Darcy's few remarks or actions, as Jane Austen intends that we should and just as Elizabeth does, to resemble those of the people who are so much his close companions. While building up a sense of Darcy and the two Bingley sisters as a group united by a common pride and selfishness, it is hard to resist viewing Bingley and the two eldest Bennet sisters as an oppositional group characterized by their generous sociability. The juxtaposition between these two sets is further made evident through Elizabeth's perception of the personalities of the people within them.

Though the plot certainly reinforces our sense of the polarity of the two groups, the real contrasts and differences are established by the remarks and reactions of Elizabeth. To position Elizabeth in the role of ironic commentator and say that her irony serves solely to be dissident to society is to misunderstand the nature of "society" itself in the novel. While Elizabeth is certainly fond of laughing at the follies and inconsistencies of her fellows, her wit is almost completely social in its prejudice. Far from being either detached from or subversive of society, her irony normally claims as its victims precisely those selfish, vain, or foolish people (like Miss Bingley, Collins, Lady Catherine, or at first impression, Darcy) who either cannot or will not contribute to making society as lively, open, and full of community as a good conversation should be. The people whom she instinctively prefers (men like Bingley, Wickham, and Colonel Fitzwilliam) are all open, agreeable, and sociable people. Elizabeth's occasional bitternesses arise not in detachment from society, but from too great a dependence upon its merely superficial aspects, from a failure to distinguish between a pleasing face or manner and something more substantial. With Elizabeth as the basis of our point of view, our focalizer, our sense of the contrast between the pride and exclusiveness of some of the characters and the generosity and sociability of others is strengthened by the force of her own social convictions.

By sharing their private worlds with one another, Darcy and Elizabeth create their marriage as a harmonious union between public and private. It is hard to see where in that vision of social and emotional harmony with which so many

would have the novel end there could be room for the doubts, the blindness, and the mistakes which Elizabeth still exhibits. Yet to understand *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of some ideal blend of the individual and the social is to speak of finalities about a writer who herself chooses to speak of what yet may come – the possible, the continuous, the incomplete. Jane Austen's "social" concerns are with private human relations, not public society itself. For instance, if Mr. Darcy is to represent society and Elizabeth rebellious individualism, how are we to account for the fact that the first major breach of society's rules is made by Mr. Darcy, when he insults Elizabeth within her hearing at the Meryton ball? It seems vague to conclude that at the moment Mr. Darcy is out of character and the remark is a technical flaw. Unquestionably, Mr. Darcy is an outstanding member of society, a landowner with both power and responsibility. His position and an accompanying sense of duties and obligations do justify a proper kind of pride. Yet this should not obscure the fact that Darcy's nature, far from being social, is reserved, independent, isolated, private, and vain. Elizabeth points to this discrepancy when she remarks to Colonel Fitzwilliam on Mr. Darcy's rude conduct at the Meryton dance: "Shall we ask him why a man of sense and education, and who has lived in the world, is ill qualified to recommend himself to strangers?" (306). Darcy himself reinforces his role as representative of the socially projected aristocratic reserve when he reminds Bingley that he detests dancing unless he is "particularly acquainted" (215) with his partner. As Elizabeth is "tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt [him]", Darcy does not wish to be seen as improper by giving "consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men." (216)

Elizabeth's failures in judgment, primarily with Mr. Wickham and Mr. Darcy, are not adequately reasoned off as a headstrong insistence on private judgment in the face of social values. It is imprecise to claim that Elizabeth should have been swayed by the fact that Mr. Wickham has a military commission and the militia, like the navy, is an honorable and a gentlemanly occupation and a respected part of Jane Austen's social scheme. It would be just as distorting for Elizabeth to find Mr. Darcy socially acceptable solely because he owns Pemberley, whatever Charlotte Lucas may think. It is Charlotte, after all, who advises Elizabeth "not to be a simpleton and allow her fancy for Wickham to make her appear unpleasant in the eyes of a man of ten times his consequence" (260). "Appearing unpleasant" in this case would be Elizabeth being too reserved in her actions towards Darcy and not showing any deference to Darcy's station. Charlotte chooses "not to be a simpleton" and will spend the rest of her life with Mr. Collins. To judge others exclusively on economic or social terms is the very sort of thinking Jane Austen would expose. Mr. Wickham is socially unacceptable, but for moral reasons rather than economic ones; not because he has no possessions but because he has no principles. And this is no more a question of manners than it is of position or money; Wickham is entirely too unreserved. Mr. Wickham can be as polite and conversant as Mr. Darcy can be reserved and rude. Elizabeth misjudges them, but not through an individualism which fails to appreciate class or social values.

For much of the story, Mr. Darcy cares for Elizabeth in spite of himself,

and she does not care for him at all. When Elizabeth does come to have some feelings for Mr. Darcy, she understands her change as above all "a motive within her of good will which could not be overlooked. It was gratitude. – Gratitude, not merely for having once loved her, but for loving her still well enough, to forgive all the petulance and acrimony of her manner in rejecting him, and all the unjust accusations accompanying her rejection" (353). Such a motive for love may not be ideal, but it has the author's full approval.

The direction in which Darcy is moving in the last half of *Pride and Prejudice* is not only towards an attitude of greater candor and sociability but also towards an involvement in laughter and ridicule. Darcy is as clearly aware as Elizabeth herself that such attentions as he pays to the Gardiners "would draw down the ridicule and censure of the ladies both of Netherfield and Rosings" (352). But now he willingly exposes himself to it. With Lydia's elopement, Darcy takes the last step: he risks the exposure of his own name and reputation by actively involving himself in retrieving the fallen reputation of the Bennets. Love is, of course, a major factor in Darcy's decision to open his family name to the remarks of such a scandal, but love only provides the willingness, the impulse. His newly found lack of reserve leads to intimacy and Elizabeth's persuasion that he is indeed the man she loves. As Darcy realizes, and as I think Jane Austen intends the reader to realize too, the duty, the responsibility of such a risk has always been there. Before Elizabeth's refusal, Darcy thought it beneath him "to lay his private actions open to the world" (384). With the same (in this case mistaken) pride which he had shown in his proposal to Elizabeth, he had simply assumed that his reputation would speak for itself without further effort on his part, that his character, his wealth, and his position would be more than sufficient to confound any lies that Wickham might dare to spread. Yet as Darcy discovers more than once in the novel, people are not to be moved in this way. It is precisely because of his refusal to be open, his inordinate fear of involving himself in ridicule that Wickham's designs are able to succeed. But it is not simply that Darcy thereby exposed his name to greater indignities by his fear of publicity than he would have if he had been more open. He also allowed a great number of people in Hertfordshire (particularly the Bennets) to be seriously victimized through their ignorance of Wickham's past. "It was owing to him," as Darcy tells Mrs. Gardiner, "to his reserve, and want of proper consideration, that Wickham's character had been so misunderstood, and consequently that he had been received and noticed as he was" (385). Had Darcy been less proudly reserved, and more willing to risk the idle remarks of the usual town gossips, Wickham's elopement with Lydia (certainly his constant reception at Longbourn) would have surely been avoided. Had he been less careful of his own reputation and more aware of his responsibilities to the society of which he is a part, the Bennets need not have been so threatened. It is only through the events surrounding Lydia's elopement that we arrive at the final adjustment of the relations between sociability and reserve. With her good sense, Jane Austen realizes that however important it is to maintain one's dignity in the world, such dignity cannot be an end in itself.

The final step Darcy takes towards an involvement in society, therefore,

goes beyond the simple sincerity he learns when he begins to meet people like the Gardiners halfway. It includes being actively engaged in a society where to be a responsible, feeling, and discriminating adult means to risk at times the exposure to laughter and ridicule. For Darcy, this means stepping down off the pedestal where his pride has kept him aloof in perfection, and joining the mass of men who, as Elizabeth will teach him, are laughing and laughed at. Both Darcy and Elizabeth must be persuaded to modify their judgments on the consequence of reserve in order to resolve the novel. Whatever else it also may be, laughter is the great equalizer in *Pride and Prejudice*. Though it may vary in complexity from the unseemly "fun" of Lydia to the sociable playfulness of Elizabeth to the moral consciousness of Jane Austen herself, laughter is there as an eternal reminder that we are all part of one community, private individuals belonging to a public society, and not even the best of men can be totally beyond the responsibility and the reproach of belonging to it.

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"When you can live forever, what do you live for?": *The Lord of the Rings* and Issues of Mortality and Immortality

Mary Helen Truglia

Mortality as a "gift"? How could death, which often causes great sorrow, be deemed a "gift"? In his masterwork, *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien investigates the human obsession with mortality and immortality through the actions of his characters. Although it is not by any means the major plotline, Aragorn's love for Arwen makes the safety of Frodo and the Ring especially important to him. He very nearly fails to guide Frodo and the Ring from Bree to the safety of Elrond's house. Had he failed, the price would have been very great, for in possession of the Ring, Sauron would have been unstoppable. All that was good in Middle-earth would have been destroyed; Aragorn would have never been allowed to marry Arwen, and all his hopes would have been dashed. Arwen's love for Aragorn, however, is even more complicated. The film version of The *Fellowship of the Ring* shows the two of them discussing their future during Aragorn's stay at Rivendell. On a bridge in a lush garden they speak tenderly of their commitment to each other. Arwen asks if Aragorn remembers her promise. He does, saying, "You said you would bind yourself to me, forsaking the immortal life of your people." Her reply is unwavering, "And to that I hold. I would rather share one lifetime with you than face all the ages of this world alone. I choose a mortal life" (22. The Evenstar). She clearly loves him, but what exactly does death have to do with her choice?

Aragorn's love will send him on a long and dangerous road to protect Frodo and the Ring. Arwen's love demands even more. If he succeeds, she will marry him and join with his fate as a mortal. Why would Arwen choose to pay such a high price? Questions like these can be answered on two levels that ultimately converge. On the first level, we as readers might look for answers that would make sense to Tolkien's characters inside his story, but Tolkien's world is rich and complex, and explaining his characters' choices is challenging. Answers on the second level concern issues of mortality and immortality in our own lives. The choices made by Arwen and Aragorn raise important questions about our own ideas of death and the afterlife. Although we as humans cannot choose to avoid death, we can learn to consider it more thoughtfully by analyzing Tolkien's difficult suggestion that death can be a gift.

Clearly, mortality is at the heart of *The Lord of the Rings*. Although they become allies in the struggle against Sauron and his efforts to dominate Middle-earth, elves and men face very different fates. Akin to humans in our world, Tolkien's men and hobbits are mortal. When their bodies die, their souls are said to leave Arda, the earth. Elvish bodies can grow weary or be hurt so that they cannot sustain life. When they do however, elvish souls remain "within the circles of the world" (Silmarillion, xxx). Men are not sure what will happen to them after death, whereas elves know that regardless of what happens to their bodies, their souls will have an active place in the life of Arda. Arwen must choose between these two fates because she is half-elven, like her father Elrond.

Half-elves are very rare, but they face the complex choice of deciding to share the fate of men or the fate of elves. Arwen chooses to share Aragorn's fate, making her own death inevitable. The process of dying in Middle-earth seems to be no more pleasant than it is in our world. But although it involves pain and separation from loved ones, wise men and most elves refer to mortality as the "gift" of men. Elves have the "gift" of immortality, lasting as long as the world endures. Curiously, most elves and men wish they could have the fate of the other race.

Two groups of mortals, however, do not envy the elves. The Ringwraiths or Nazgul, the shadowy figures who pursue Frodo to Rivendell, are the undead human kings that accepted the nine Rings of Power and in doing so became Sauron's slaves. When Frodo puts on the Ring, it is as if he enters another reality. But the reality of the Ringwraiths has existed all the time; wearing the Ring only serves to make that reality visible to Frodo. The Ringwraiths are horrific because they are not immortal, but undead; for them, not dying is a curse. The kings who accepted the rings from Sauron are still inherently men. Because their lust for power leads the Nine to join with Sauron, their existence continues past the time when they should have received the gift of death. They are held in existence by the cruel will of their master and their lust for the Ring. They pursue Frodo because he possesses the Ring; their existence is consumed completely by the desire to obtain it. In his treatment of the Ringwraiths, Tolkien assumes that existence is not always preferable to non-existence. While we are tempted to think that living is always better than dying, Tolkien posits that only natural existence is a good thing. Continuing to exist in any other way—any unnatural way—is worse than death. Like other beings, Ringwraiths have a nature, a way that they are supposed to be. Even though the Ring dominates them, they are still by nature men. When any natural thing is prevented from fulfilling its purpose, it becomes frustrated, knowing it is incomplete. For the Ringwraiths, unending existence is a fate worse than death; it involves the perpetual pain of having their natures frustrated.

A second group of mortals who do not envy elvin deathlessness includes noble men like Aragorn and faithful hobbits such as Frodo. They are somehow able to embrace death without being overcome by despair. The virtues of mortality are most obvious in the great paradox of the book: that the very mortal hobbits are the ones who can best resist the Ring's seduction and destroy it. Seemingly the most insignificant and lowliest race of all, they spend their (relatively) short lives in small pursuits. They have little use for lofty "elvish" ideas. As most other characters in *The Lord of the Rings* remark, they are unlikely saviors of the world. In fact, the hobbits' lowly mortality may be their greatest asset. The hobbits are firmly enfleshed. They love gardening, visiting, eating and drinking—"six meals a day (when they could get them)"—and parties and presents (FotR, 2). Also, unlike the other lands we see, the Shire is full of children, for Tolkien tells us that hobbits have very large families, Frodo and Bilbo being "as bachelors very exceptional" (FotR, 8). This is true of no other race in Middle Earth. The immortal elves, of course, need few children. Arwen seems to be spoken of as one of the youngest of her people; they call her their "Evenstar". Legolas has apparently been his father's

heir for eons. The dwarves, though mortal, are very long-lived, and they have children so seldom that many believe they are not born, but grow from stones. The Ents seem to live more or less forever, but even they are dying out. "There have been no Entings—no children, you would say, not for a terrible long count of years," Treebeard tells Merry and Pippin. "The Ents gave their love to the things they met in the world, and the Entwives gave their thoughts to other things." (TTT, 78) Finally the Entwives disappeared altogether.

It is not only the older and the lesser races that have ceased to bear children. Barrenness also characterizes Gondor until after the return of the King. Once great, the city has declined. Pippin sees there many houses that have fallen empty, so that "it lacked half the men that could have dwelt at ease there." Beregond the guard tells him, "There were always too few children in the city." (RotK, 23) When Faramir meets Frodo, he explains his country's decay more fully: Death was ever present, because the Numenoreans still, as they had in their own kingdom and so lost it, hungered after endless life unchanging. Kings made tombs more splendid than houses of the living, and counted old names in the rolls of their descent dearer than the names of sons. Childless lords sat in aged halls musing on heraldry; in secret chambers withered old men compounded strong elixirs, or in high cold towers asked questions of the stars, and the last king of the line of Anorien had no heir. (TTT, 310-311) Personal immortality, or the lure of it, seems to turn members of all these races in on themselves. The Elves dwell more in their memories than in the present; the long-lived mortal races turn to glorious deeds in an attempt at personal immortality. For the Elves and the Ents, the result is a kind of lethargy. For men it can be far more sinister: in Boromir and especially in Denethor, Tolkien shows the pride and despair that come from the pursuit of personal immortality through individual glory. The Hobbits have no illusions that they can in any sense live forever. As a result, they concentrate on immediate and animal concerns. They pursue immortality only by a far humbler and more mortal path: the ordinary, impersonal immortality of parenthood. It is no accident that everyone who meets the Hobbits mistakes them for children at first. Even after long acquaintance, they are to Legolas "those merry young folk" and to Treebeard "the Hobbit children". There is something intrinsic about the Hobbits that is so lively and natural that they invariably turn the minds of others toward childhood and children.

This fertility, this willingness to pass life on to a new generation rather than grasping for endless life unchanging, is the hobbits' great strength, as it should likewise be mankind's proper strength. It makes them at once humbler than immortals, since they place less confidence in their own individual abilities, and more hopeful, since their own individual defeats are not the end of everything. The life that lives for its offspring may never achieve perfection, but neither is it ever utterly defeated or utterly corrupted. Some hope always remains. Legolas and Gimli discuss this tenacity of mortals when they first see Gondor. Gimli observes in the older stonework of the city a promise unfulfilled by the newer: "It is ever so with the things that men begin: there is a frost in Spring or a blight in Summer, and they fail of their promise." "Yet seldom do they fail of their seed," said

Legolas. "And that will lie in times and places unlooked for. The deeds of Men will outlast us, Gimli." (RotK, 153)

Here and throughout the book, seed is Tolkien's symbol for the hope particular to mortals. Gandalf tells Denethor that he too is a steward, charged with preserving all good things. He will not have failed completely, he says, "if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to come"(RotK, 16). Gondor's emblem, a white tree, withered centuries ago. Even after Sauron's defeat, Aragorn is anxious for his realm until he can find a seedling to replant in the Citadel. For as he tells Gandalf, however long his life, he is still mortal. Gandalf's answer tells Aragorn to seek hope in mortality: "Turn your face from the green world, and look where all seems barren and cold" (RotK, 270). Aragorn finds the seedling—growing alone on a stony, snowy slope—that signifies the continuance of his reign through his heirs. He seeks life in a place of death, as he did before in the Paths of the Dead, as Arwen did when she chose mortal life with him, as the hobbits did when they undertook the ostensibly hopeless quest, and as Gandalf did when he died, though immortal.

It is not hard to see why the Ringwraiths would welcome death as a release from endless torment, but it is more difficult to understand why both men and elves would call death a "gift". Most elves expect that when men die their souls will be annihilated, ceasing to exist altogether. Because we share with Tolkien's men and hobbits the "gift" of death, we find it less difficult to understand their fears regarding death and what comes after it. Hamlet's famous "to be or not to be" speech deals with the problem directly: death is "the undiscovered country" (Shakespeare, III, I). It may be sleep, it may bring fantastic dreams, or it may bring hellish torment. For Hamlet, not knowing what is yet to come is a good reason to avoid death. We are fascinated by the afterlife because of the great difference between torment and bliss. Uncertainty about what we may find can make the subject frightening, yet it also makes the topic remarkable to analyze, as Tolkien does through *The Lord of the Rings*. The wise and good Arwen, who has given up her elvish immortality to be Aragorn's queen, is overcome at his deathbed and pleads for him to stay with her longer. He refuses, saying that it is right for him to go with good grace and before he grows feeble. He then tells her:

> "I speak no comfort to you, for there is no comfort for such pain within the circles of the world. The uttermost choice is before you: to repent and go to the Havens and bear away into the West the memory of our days together that shall there be evergreen but never more than memory; or else to abide the Doom of Men." (RotK, 377)

Arwen replies that she has no choice:

> "I must indeed abide the Doom of Men whether I will or nill: the loss and the silence. But I say to you, King of the Numenoreans, not till now have I understood the tale of your people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I pity them at last. For if this is indeed, as the Elves say, the gift of

the One to Men, it is bitter to receive." (RotK, 377-378)

In this new and bitter knowledge, she goes away alone after Aragorn's death, "the light of her eyes . . . quenched . . . cold and gray as nightfall that comes without a star" (RotK, 378). She dies alone in the long abandoned land of Lorien, where deathless Elves once lived. For Arwen, otherwise infinitely wiser than we, death is the one unknown, a new and unexpected discovery. Aragorn knows better; he knows, as all mortals should, that comfort is impossible and even unworthy in the face of death. Yet he still holds fast to what Arwen has only known as an abstract theological tenet: that death is truly God's gift.

This passage is haunting in a way that is difficult to explain. At the heart of it is the phrase "the gift of the One to Men". Tolkien looks unblinkingly at "the loss and the silence" of death, but remains steadfast: death is our curse, but also our blessing. He has hidden this particular tale away in an appendix, but the same idea of mortality permeates the whole book. The plot centers on a Ring that gives immortality and corrupts its bearer. Much of the book's character interest arises from the interactions between mortal and immortal races, who both mystify and fascinate each other. The structure of the work also echoes mortality itself. I have heard friends criticize the long denouement (over a hundred pages), but I have never fully understood such complaints. I was grateful for every page, always vividly aware that they would run out all too soon. Those closing chapters are a portrait of mortality: however happily a story ends, it must end, and that itself is our great sorrow. All that is beautiful and beloved dies. The Fellowship of the Ring accomplishes its quest, but with the end of its troubles comes the separation of its members. Gandalf and the High Elves win the war, but their own victory banishes them from Middle Earth. With them "many fair things will fade and be forgotten" (FotR, 282). Frodo has saved the world but now longs to leave it. This has to be one of literature's saddest happy endings. Tolkien makes us savor the bittersweet, for he knows (like Gandalf) that "not all tears are an evil" (RotK, 339)

It is tempting to conclude that Tolkien calls death a "gift" simply because it releases men from the wearying tedium of endless existence. It is unlikely, however, that Tolkien intends for his readers to draw this conclusion about mortality. Apart from his insistence that the story was not written as an allegory of any kind, the Lord of the Rings is part of a larger history that is purposely written from an elvish point of view. What elves would value dominates the way the story is told. Being released from the burden of immortality is a source of eager interest because it is something the elves cannot have. In her choice of Aragorn and his fate, Arwen prefers a finite life of deep love to an unending life without that love. To remain immortal is to be in some way disconnected or muted from the strongest human emotions, such as love and grief. It was not possible to both have the great joy of his love and be deathless. Arwen does not choose death for its own sake. She chooses life with Aragorn for its own sake and accepts eventual death as the price she was willing to pay.

Unlike the elvish "immortality" in a finite world, the Christian heaven

that Tolkien looked forward to is an endless afterlife of fellowship with limitless good. Even the most blessed of the elves would theoretically at some point run out of things to learn about the circles of their world. For Christians, on the other hand, heaven involves getting to know God—the infinite good—for eternity. The blessed in this kind of afterlife cannot exhaust all that can be known about God. Elvish immortality will be repetitive eventually, but the immortality Tolkien expected cannot be.

The hope of life that mortality offers is far from certain. Legolas and Gimli's conversation continues with Gimli wondering if men's deeds will "yet come to naught in the end but might-have-beens." "To that the Elves know not the answer," replies Legolas. (RotK, 153)

We do not know the answer either. Tolkien is not cheerily trying to pretend that our condition is ideal, or that mortality guarantees us any kind of virtue. But unlike the earthly immortality he has envisioned for us, our mortality offers another and higher hope beyond this world, however uncertain it may seem. This hope is the comfort Aragorn offers Arwen in his last words: "In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold, we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory. Farewell!" (RotK, 378)

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Cicero, the Stoics, and Fate

Nate Kamiya

I. On Physicians and Illness

> *'If it is fated for you to recover from this illness whether you call the doctor or not, you will recover; similarly, if it is fated for you not to recover from this illness whether you call the doctor or not, you will not recover. And one of the two is fated. Therefore, there is no point in calling the doctor.'*
>
> (Cicero, qtd in R&M, p 383)

No, it's not the latest argument against universal healthcare, it's Cicero warning us against the troublesome and "so-called 'Lazy Argument'" (R&M, p 383) for fatalism, setting up his examination and critique of the Stoic philosophy in one of the few fragments remaining to us from his work On Fate. Though very little of this piece remains to us today, what we do have shows the slightly eclectic and pragmatic views that we associate with Cicero. A self-proclaimed Academic, he was wary to fall into the trap of claiming all action to be utterly futile, but he still did not want to make a complete departure from Stoic fatalism and predetermination.

II. Cicero

In order to understand Cicero's views, it is helpful to know a little bit about the man. A Roman citizen, Cicero came after the flourishing of Greek philosophy and just before the onset of Christian theology. Had he been born a few hundred years earlier, or for that matter, a few hundred years later, his intellectual stature would have been easily eclipsed, but as it was, in the intellectual void of Rome, "he was a poet, a statesman, and the greatest orator of his time" (R&M, p 379). Born in 106 B.C., at the behest of his father, Cicero obtained the finest education the period had to offer, and under a diverse set of tutors. His first was an Epicurean, but he also was taught by and encountered Skeptics, Stoics, and Academics (R&M p 379). Probably, most significant of this last group was Antiochus of Ascalon, with whom he developed a close friendship. Antiochus was interested in reconciling some of the differences between Academics and Stoics and bringing the two philosophies closer together (Gods, p xiii).

A powerful speaker, Cicero ascended the court hierarchy as fast as the law would allow, highly unusual for a young politician in the highly fraternal Roman legislature. He would reach the highest office (that of consul), only to see it stripped from him five years later after his brutal suppression of an attempted coup. This led him to the first of several hiatuses from politics, and to his pursuit of scholarly writing. Cicero was by nature an ambitious man and his political life consumed him. He was a politician first and a philosopher second. It was these respites from political life that allowed him to delve into his philosophical

interests.

His political career and his identification with the Academics led Cicero to a pragmatic and somewhat skeptical view of philosophy. This is not to say that he found the pursuit superfluous (it was one of his greatest passions, next to his own advancement), he simply held an innate aversion to orthodoxy and believed (like his fellow Academics) that absolute truth was a tenuous thing at best. He describes it most clearly in his piece, Academica:

> *The sole aim of our discussions is to tease out--or, as it were, squeeze out--something which is either true or comes as close to it as is possible, by speaking on both sides of the issue and listening [to our opponents].*
>
> (qtd in R&M, p 380)

He goes on to deride the indoctrinated:

> *...we are freer and more flexible just insofar as our ability to decide lies wholly in our own hands; we are not compelled by necessity to defend a whole set of positions which are laid down like orders. For the others are tied down and committed before they can decide what is best.*
>
> (qtd in R&M, p 380)

III. The Stoics

Yet, despite his self-proclaimed open-mindedness, his characterization of early Stoic views on fate (quoted earlier) is unfair. The Stoics were highly influential, providing important insight into logic, linguistics, and freewill--and over a great period of time; Stoicism was "the dominant philosophy of Greece and Rome for five hundred years" (Matson, p 190). The timing of this movement was no coincidence. Its focus on the individual as a part of the whole, and on the self versus external forces was particularly significant during the waning days of the Greek city-state and the rise of Roman centralism and bureaucracy. As Rome slowly annexed Greece and the Greek city-states lost their autonomy, loss of individual power became a vexing issue. Roman citizens did not participate in the governance of their country. There was a bureaucratic class that saw to the daily grind and expansion of the empire. Rome's people were placated through entertainment and a subsidized lifestyle.

For many scholars the issue became less and less a pursuit of the perfect political system or community, and more and more about how to survive and thrive in world out of their control. Cue Stoicism:

> *Some things are up to us, and others are not. Up to us are opinion, movement towards a thing, desire, aversion, and in a word, whatever are our own acts; not up to us are the body, property, reputation, offices, and in a word, whatever are not our own acts. And the things that are up to us are by nature free, not subject to restraint nor hindrance; but the things not up to us are weak, slavish,*

subject to restraint, in the power of others.

(Epictetus, qtd in Matson, p 189)

Epictetus was a slave who would later teach philosophy. This passage is nearly echoed by the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. As Matson puts it, "it is an arresting fact that of the two greatest Stoics, one was an emperor, the other a slave" (Matson, p 190). Stoicism didn't merely probe ideas of power and submittance in the abstract--its followers were a living experiment in it.

But there were contradictions within the Stoic teachings. The Stoics divided their philosophy into three categories: "Logic, Physics, and Ethics." Their contributions to Logic are still used today. They created grammar as we know it--studying their own language and coming up with a consistent terminology and set of rules to explain it. They laid the groundwork for propositional calculus. But their "Physics," an explanation for the ordering of the cosmos, becomes lacking, a kind of gumbo of previous views (Olympian, Orphic, Heraclitean, Platonic, etc. Matson, p 191), and their justification for it more so. Essentially, the Stoics hold that the universe is one inseparable entity, divided only between its active and passive elements. It is a living and sentient entity, which at the end of its lifespan is burned away in a cleansing fire and 'reborn.' This is an eternal cycle, with each period occurring exactly how it did previously (I have written this essay exactly as I am writing it countless times over, and I will write it exactly as I have written it countless times over again) (Matson, p 192). The arrangement of events in these periods is not random, however, as "God, the World-Soul, directs everything for the best... everything that exists cooperates with everything else to produce the best possible effect" (Matson, p 192).

To support this, Balbus (in Cicero's *The Nature of the Gods*) argues that the proof is in the pudding. The orderly arrangement of the stars, the bounteous nature of fruits and grains at man's disposal, all of these, point to Design with a capital D. It is an argument that has been used through the ages, even today by Christian proponents of Intelligent Design ('how can one look around, see this wondrous universe, and not see a plan behind it?'). He compares the universe to a house of furniture. If we were to enter this house, would we not believe there was some design behind it? Cicero disproves this later in his book, but we will first continue to lay out the Stoic position.

It is in the third discipline of Stoic philosophy, "Ethics," where the fissures and contradictions within their teachings become glaringly apparent. Early Stoic "Ethical" teachings had less to do with a moral division between right and wrong than a division between internal and external forces; forces within the control of the individual and those forces outside of his or her control. Yet even though these distinctions are made it becomes difficult to separate them from "Fate" and the "World-Soul" as described in the "Physics." If all things are decided where does free will fit in? Even one's response to a situation would have to have been predetermined in the universe laid out by the Stoics, yet they try to teach us that this is the only thing in our power. It is this contradiction that Cicero attempts to reconcile.

IV. Battle Royale

Cicero lays out his book, *The Nature of the Gods*, in the fashion of Plato--as a dialogue between several prominent historical figures, each chosen to represent a differing school of thought. There are some important distinctions, however. Unlike Plato, Cicero has placed himself directly within the work (though as an uncharacteristically mute observer). And while many of Plato's works feature the dissemination of knowledge between master and pupil, Cicero, in a reflection of his Academic preferences, has elected to structure his piece more democratically. The characters of his piece meet on relatively equal footing, and it is left up to the weightiness of their arguments to sway the reader. While Cicero has made a concerted effort to be fair in his presentation of the argument, his predispositions are readily apparent within the structure of the work. The first book combines both a defense and critique of the Epicurean world view, and is still noticeably shorter than the second two, which are each devoted exclusively to Stoicism's defense or critique. He is quick to dismiss the Epicureans, but his dealings with the Stoics are much lengthier.

It is Stoic views on divinity that Cicero dismantles first in Book III. It is not enough for Cotta (another intellectual in the story gathered for discussion) to disprove Balbus, he also takes on one of the early Stoics, Zeno, quoting him thus: "'That which employs reason is better than that which does not. Now nothing is better than the universe. Therefore the universe employs reason,'" he continues, showing the logical fallacy within this claim, "Accept this reasoning, and your conclusion will be that the universe seems adept at reading a book ... you will be able to frame a syllogism like this: A thing which is literate is better than a thing which is not" (Gods, p 115). Since, he claims, "nothing is better than the universe ... the universe will also be eloquent, and a mathematician, and a musician as well; in short... the universe will finally be a philosopher!" (*Gods*, p 115). This troubles Cotta, as he believes there are gods, but Balbus' arguments does nothing to prove this. In his conclusion at the end of Book III, Cicero is troubled by Cotta's arguments, but he finds the Stoic worldview to be closer to the truth.

The "Physics" discipline of Stoicism addressed, Cicero examines their "Ethics" in *On Fate*. He begins by showing the development from the highly simplistic statement at the beginning of this essay. First Chrysippus disproves this with his theory of 'co-fatedness.' That is to say that certain outcomes are paired with other events: "'calling the doctor is fated just as much as recovering'" (Cicero, qtd in R&M, p 383). Dissatisfied with this explanation, Caneades would go on to further develop this into a theory of every event happening out of necessity as the result of a "closely knit web of natural connections" (Cicero, qtd in R&M, p 383). Already this is problematic for Cicero as it would render a number of the Roman myths false (the gods would not be able to make predictions, because they could not know all of the factors leading to a future event), but he continues, looking back to the views of "older philosophers" (p 384) and dividing them into two camps: those who believed in involuntary fate, and those who believed that there was voluntary action without fate. He lays out

the arguments of the latter against the former: if all events are fated, and their causes are therefore fated, then all things deriving from cause must be fated, therefore action and thought are fated and not in our power. If neither thought nor action is in our power "'it follows that neither praise nor blame nor honours nor punishments are fair'" (Cicero, qtd in R&M, p 384). Unless you are a Sophist, this is obviously false.

Cicero returns to the more immediate past and examines Chrysippus, who tried to toe a middle ground, creating a system of "primary, auxiliary and proximate" causes to allow for self-determination. Primary and antecedent causes were fated and could not be changed, but events would also rely on proximate and auxiliary causes. Events stimulating impulse and "assent" (the process of interpreting the senses) would fall into these latter categories, meaning that human thought would be affected by them (and therefore the resulting actions as well), but that an individual's consciousness (and nature) would act as the primary cause for any resulting action. The argument, hardly complete, seems to separate processes of the soul from that of the rest of the universe. Cicero's final views on the subject, are unfortunately, something of a mystery, as the remainder of the text is lost. He does go on to compare Chrysippus with those who oppose notions of fate and to claim that they share more in common than not in a particularly dense passage. Examining the trajectory set by his earlier works and life we can imagine that this last view would have been in line with what he would have accepted, a Stoic worldview with some nuance.

V. The End...

That predetermination and the problem of free will is an issue still plaguing us some two thousand plus years after it was posed by the Stoics and wrestled with by Cicero is not surprising. The obvious flaw in Chrysippus' logic, that Cicero may or may not have gone on to point out, is that if a person's nature is the primary cause of the actions they choose, and external events only a kind of catalyst (he compares it to giving a cylinder or cone motion), could a person's nature be predetermined and therefore render moot his argument? A cylinder or cone is a set shape. If one was to shove either one, it would be pretty obvious how it would behave. Likewise, if a person's personality had a certain 'shape' to it, and one applied an "auxiliary or proximate" force to it wouldn't the outcome be decided? Are all of an individual's choices simply an illusion, like the multiplicity of TV screens presented to Neo by The Architect? These are vexing problems.

The Stoic answer to the threat of insurmountable power was a kind of passivity which is, frankly, unappealing. Their solution to a Roman bureaucratic machine was to hide in personal solace. Whether or not one's pre-determined fate could be predicted, the idea that one's entire life is fated, every chemical process and resulting action predetermined by a long chain of events ad-infinitum is troubling, to say the least. The idea of choice, even if it is only an illusion, is comforting. Stoics held that choice lay within an individual's acceptance

of outside forces (one can either be the dog dragged behind the cart or the dog walking alongside it). Yet the rest of their belief system seems to find that individuals do not have a choice even in this. Add to that that it does nothing to address issues of morality (would we have had a Civil Rights movement if Stoicism was still en vogue?), and Stoicism quickly has enough holes to make it sink faster than the Titanic.

Cicero's response to this helps tease out some of the contradictions, yet it is entirely inadequate in finding a satisfactory solution or alternative. Where does that leave us? A very cynical response would be that either way the answer is irrelevant. If our entire lives are predetermined it does not matter whether we accept this fact or not (this has already been decided). On the other hand, if we continue behaving as if we have some say in the universe (which we, by nature are bound to do), and we do actually pull some weight around here, then it, likewise, won't change much. Still, if the aim of Philosophy isn't to examine the way things are, but the way they ought to be, than this isn't sufficient. If the Philosophers of Antiquity weren't able to come up with a satisfactory solution, perhaps we should look to more modern sources to find an answer. Who knows, maybe it'll be the Watchowsky brothers.

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Muses of Poetry, Muses of Poison
First Place, Freshman Writing Prize
Catherine King

"Life," muses an eternal six-year-old, speaking as an allegory of modern man, "should be more like TV. All of life's problems ought to be solved in 30 minutes with simple homilies … Life overall should be more glamorous, thrill-packed, and filled with applause, don't you think?" (Watterson 94) Bill Watterson, in 1989, used the hyperactive, loquacious Calvin as a voice for a trend that he saw, for a wish that life imitate art, rather than the other way around. Watterson saw a trend that, instead of living in the complex, troubling, and indifferent world, people turned to the world of fiction that is 'produced,' not 'created,' and which has only sordid distractions to offer. It is the same dilemma, addressed in a similar way, that Boethius the Christian philosopher recognized. Bewildered by exile and with the threat of execution hanging over his head, with all his former glory meaningless to him now, his first instinct is to turn to what he calls "the Muses of poetry." After a time Boethius recognizes the harm they are doing to his heart and intellect, and rejects them in favor of creating a lasting, meaningful work in the form of an allegorical dialogue between himself and the personification of Philosophy, who loses no time in expelling the "whores from the theater" and "their sweet poison" from his bedside (Boethius 4). Almost ten years later, the leader of the same Roman Church to which Boethius pledged his life attempts to bring Boethius, the premier writer of the Middle Ages, back into the public eye, back into the awareness of Catholics everywhere.

Is Pope Benedict XVI's idea doomed to fail? In a world where the Muses of poetry, not of philosophy, are the comforters of the masses, how does Boethius, martyr and philosopher, match up? He wrote to reflect trends of the classical age, even as that world decayed, giving way into the Dark and Middle ages. Our time, too, undergoes dramatic changes, though Western thought still adheres to one of the "bedrocks of the liberal age," John Stuart Mill, the Victorian English philosopher ahead of his time, who also lived at a time of great and moving change in the world, and his writings reflected and enhanced those changes (Gopnik). The dynamism of our time is reflected by the recent sprouting of 'happiness studies,' which study pleasure, how to replicate it and how to mass-produce it. Thus happiness becomes a commodity, a constant necessity to be gained at any cost, including the annihilation of the bitter but salubrious force of melancholy. This zeitgeist moves away from Mill, whose attitude towards happiness is more like an indulgent physician, allotting it in generous, but careful, portions to his patients. We also move away from Boethius' idea of suffering with the admonishing, necessary force of Bad Fortune. Yet our culture's rejection of unhappiness could be traced to these selfsame philosophers, whose lives and thinking failed to incorporate indelible misery. Instead they viewed the plagues of the human condition, both personal and societal, as easily removable injuries. Like a broken bone that, when not set properly, becomes painful and arduous as the years go by, this failure may have caused deep repercussions in current

thought. So, we ask, is Boethius' medicine still potent, or have the flaws in his formula rendered us too surfeited to swallow any of his medicine?
Boethius is a product of his own changing time, expressing himself in antiquated styles but expressing ideas that are revolutionary in many ways. In his mind, Lady Philosophy, like Athena, goddess of crafts, wears a cloak "woven by her own hands into an everlasting fabric" that highlights the grandeur of one "so old that she could not be thought of as belonging to our age" (Boethius 4). With that detail, Boethius honors Lady Philosophy as a being of the past, rather than of his present. This is not surprising, as the very appearance of Lady Philosophy in his story uses an old and familiar device, the deus ex machina. His affection for the past is typical in a time of relentless change, as he stands on the cusp between the end of the world of Rome and the start of the Dark Ages. Yet, his reliance on the goodwill of the singular, omnipotent God is a definitive step away from the polytheism of the old Roman days, and a hallmark of the monotheistic Middle Ages, where people lived in fear of the Lord, the only Lord they had. In "seeking a synthesis between the Hellenistic-Roman heritage and the Gospel message," Boethius earns a place as "the last representative of ancient Roman culture and the first of the Medieval intellectuals," forming a bridge between the styles and the thought patterns of these times (Audience). His ability to combine these two disparate worlds so well kept his message meaningful and relevant through the Middle Ages and up to the Renaissance of classical thought, which has been the basis of Western thought since then. However, whether in classical times, the Victorian Era or today, philosophy has been the privilege of the wealthy and the thoughtful. This presents a disadvantage in terms of dealing with ills such as poverty and willful ignorance, as philosophers tend to be unable to look at these conditions from the inside out. This is a flaw to which not even Boethius was immune, and it subsequently infected such great minds of later eras as John Stuart Mill.

Having lived their lives as members of the established elite, it is no surprise that both Mill and Boethius were freed and encouraged to participate in philosophical discussion, and to share their ideas on happiness versus unhappiness. However, both had lived happy lives. Boethius mentions how generous Fortune had been to him in blessing him with a loving family, riches, and honor. His daydream of what life might have been in a bygone, utopian society, is that "[men's] hunger was easily satisfied by acorns… and [they] rested in the shade of the high pines" (Boethius 33). This line is spoken with the conviction of one who has never eaten a ground acorn, or slept out in the wilderness without a secure roof over his head. To Boethius, the universe is inherently good, ruled over as it is by a good Creator, and his idea of what life was like at the dawn of civilization is very similar to the Eden of Judeo-Christian dogma, unmarred by greed or even terrors of the natural world. His eloquence is laudable, but the idea still shows a worldview that lacks a place for fear and misery, which have been mankind's constant companion – although in different forms through different ages. To clarify, Boethius certainly suffers when *The Consolation of Philosophy* opens, but his suffering is not the misery that poverty

inflicts, which is a woe to more people than exile and shame. Fourteen hundred years later, Mill follows in Boethius' footsteps, complacently, almost arrogantly, stating that "no one whose opinion deserves a moment's consideration can doubt that most of the great positive evils of the world are in themselves removable, and will… be in the end reduced within narrow limits," though he does qualify this progress as being "grievously slow" (Mill 15). This statement blankets all number of thinkers, past, contemporary, and future, under the bane of "not deserving a moment's consideration." Such optimism! He speaks thusly from the very height of the Victorian era: a man in the British Empire, on which the sun never set, so well-born that to him, education was a duty, a requirement, a fact of life, "[taking] the forward movement so much for granted" that it is never questioned (Gopnik). This tendency is clear in both Boethius and Mill. What kind of a Middle Ages would be built on Boethius' foundation? More relevantly, what kind of a twenty-first century arises from over a century and a half of applying Mill's Utilitarian theories to a society already built on Boethius?

First, Mill's influence on today's morality must be established beyond doubt, just as we have proven Boethius' influence and foreshadowing of the Middle Ages. Now, Mill, despite writing in the Victorian era, which was built on religious fervor, the slave trade, and the subjugation of women, departed radically from all these conventions with *Utilitarianism* and other writings. "Actions are right in proportion that they tend to promote happiness," he wrote, "wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness" – no divine scripture dishes out morality for him, but simple human experience, human judgment (Mill 7). His publication of *Utilitarianism* coincided with the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, which would complement and bolster Mill's arguments in ways that neither man could foresee. Today, suffering and happiness are indeed the benchmarks of moral action. "Mill's thought… is alive right now on every page of the morning paper" (Gopnik). Any debate that involves human life, suffering, and activity is an exercise for us, as we continue to "work out the consequences of his thoughts and his practice" (Gopnik). So Mill is one of the primary informers of our world's mores and habits of thought. Now, understanding that a flaw in theory leads to a flaw in practice, let's inspect what Boethius and Mill's oversight may have led to in the 21st century.

Mill's flaw is, as stated before, complacency, an underestimation of the world's miseries, of their staying power. Boethius, though he recognized the world as being riddled with evil, sometimes past the point of despair, also saw the universe as a basically good place, and did not account for certain deep-rooted fears. Today our attitude towards the world around us reflects this. Adam Wilson cites the "eroding away of our ozone layer," our threat to "annihilate hundreds of exquisite animal species," rendering "our forests… as bland as pavement" – now, *these* are not Mill's and Boethius' fault, but what baffles Wilson is how, in a study "conducted by the Pew Research Center… almost 85 percent of Americans believe that they are very happy or at least pretty happy" (Wilson). Neither Mill nor Boethius believed that the world was unequivocally good, and neither one wrote in a context informed by the slow, human-engineered death of the planet,

and certainly neither wrote in a context where eighty-five percent of people called themselves "very happy or pretty happy." Suffering and how to resolve it was the focus of their works, the inspiration. Boethius especially embraced the position that "anxiety is the necessary condition of human happiness, since human happiness is never completely achieved and never permanently kept" (Boethius 28). To live, to be human, to desire too much, is to suffer. Boethius is certain that even if God Himself were "overgenerous with treasures of gold and deigned to satisfy every plea… still all this would not satisfy" the hearts of men – how, then, are eighty-five percent of people able to say that they are happy? (Boethius 25) We are unhappy because we seek the same source of happiness that Boethius did at the start of his sorrows: the Muses of poetry. To return to Bill Watterson's observations, young Calvin, the Everyman of our generation, suggests that life would be better if it imitated television. Ergo, "we should all have powerful, high-paying jobs… all our desires should be instantly gratified," a pronouncement that bears much in common with the Boethius of the beginning of the book, who thinks that he has lost all chance for happiness because he has lost riches, power, and fame (Watterson 94). He eventually realizes that such gifts "seduce weak men away from the true good… but misfortune often turns them around and forcibly leads them back" onto the right path (Boethius 40). However, Boethius' insight into the futility of poetry to alleviate his woes is a part of his enduring introspection – and introspection is a gift rarely employed today. People today instead "fall easily into well-worn 'happy' behaviors, into the conventions of contentment," being unable to do little else against a society that sets the "status quo [at] nothing short of manic bliss" (Wilson). Thus, nothing is new under the sun, but by constant adulation of the Muses of Poetry, Americans are able to convince themselves of their own happiness, despite the country and planet falling apart in plain sight.

Boethius frequently invokes the image of Lady Philosophy as a great physician, the "nurse of all virtues," and would surely agree with this diagnosis of the American people: we are "eradicating a major cultural force, the muse behind much art and poetry and music… annihilating melancholia," in a spirit similar to the six-year-old who refuses his bitter vitamins, and insists on eating the same sweet food every day. (Boethius 27, Wilson). Why does the child refuse his vitamins? It is a habit instilled in him by the two guiding philosophers, who, through no fault of their own, failed to accept the bitterness of life, the misery and fear, and deal with it on its own terms. The influence that these philosophers had on the *zeitgeist* of the twenty-first century is undeniable and indelible, for better or for worse. As true as in Boethius' day, this zeitgeist prompts people to seek answers and solace in pop fiction, which offers a sweet nothingness, a brighter and flashier reflection of the grimy world in which we live, and in which we have always lived, and always will. To respond to the question posed at the beginning of this essay, yes, Boethius is just as relevant, just as meaningful, and just as needed today as he was in 425 A.D. If he reflects an antiquated world, he reflects the very best of a world that was changing dramatically, forever, both the values of the past and the direction of the future. We need to study Boethius' words, and

and the styles and writings on which he built, and of course the great thinkers who built on *him* – not the least of whom, John Stuart Mill, exacerbated the flaws that Boethius himself betrayed. In failing to consider the lowest aspects of human existence, they unwittingly built a society where these aspects fall by the wayside, where what should be terrifying is dismissible, and problems that are, in fact, indelible, are brushed off with a vague certainty that they will "take care of themselves" – a thinking that leads, ironically, to the lack of resolve to do anything about removable threats to our livelihood as a nation, as we sit about distracted idly by the Muses of Poetry, waiting for our lives to reach that ecstatic peak that we see epitomized on TV.

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Eric Wilson criticizes what he sees today as an over-reliance on positive psychology. He warns that in removing sorrow and melancholy from the list of mankind's viable emotions, we could be removing the impetus for many of the great works of art. He uses the life of John Keats, Romantic poet extraordinaire, as an example.

Gopnik, Adam. "Right Again." *The New Yorker*. (6 Oct. 2008). 25 November 2008. <http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2008/10/06/081006crat atlargegopnik?currentPage=all>
A short biography of John Stuart Mill, accompanied by light commentary on his life and philosophy. Not only did it provide a very valuable context to Mill's life and thoughts, but also it's a very entertaining article in its own right.

Mill, John Stuart. *Utilitarianism*. 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001
Pleasure, argues Mr. Mill, is the highest goal to which mankind can aspire. What he means by 'pleasure,' how mankind can recognize how to provide the most pleasure to the most people, and similar philosophical questions, are all addressed in this series of three essays.

"General Audience of Pope Benedict XVI, 12 March 2008." *The Holy See*. 2008 Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 5 December 2008. <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi audiences/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20080312_en.html>
Pope Benedict XVI here exhorts his congregation, the Church, to reconsider some of the oldest Christian philosophers. Boethius, here, is largely painted as a martyr who was able to find trust in God's Providence, and held up as an example for Catholics to follow.

Watterson, Bill. *The Indispensable Calvin and Hobbes*. Kansas City: Andrew and McMeel, 1992
Calvin and Hobbes have influenced me, personally, about as much as the two actual philosophers have affected world thinking. Beneath an innocent exterior, this book contains many real human truths and reflection, supplemented by incredible cartooning and some timeless hilarity.

Is Electroconvulsive Therapy Ethical?
Carlyn Werderman
FSW 2

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT): a form of treatment in which a convulsion is produced by sending an electric current through the brain in order to eradicate one's mental illness, like depression, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Is it ethical to send an electrical pulse through the brain when one can experience the possible side effects, such as memory loss? In the past, ECT's use was cruel, inhumane, and unethical. Originally, it was administered without anesthesia and muscle relaxants because they did not exist at the time. Most of the time, ECT was ineffective. Today, electroconvulsive treatment is different. Today, ECT is ethical. Today, the procedure is performed properly, with anesthesia, muscle relaxants. With high-dose unilateral or low-dose bilateral treatment, ECT is effective treatment for patients who have not responded well to other medications for their mental illness, despite the risk of memory loss.

There are several arguments that attempt to argue that ECT is unethical. One argument is in regards to how ECT is actually performed today. From the 1940s to the 1960s, electroconvulsive therapy was used as a primary form of treatment, usually administered to a patient two to three times a week (Electroconvulsive, 2002). During 1975, 1980, and 1986 an estimated amount of 126,739 were admitted into a psychiatric hospital. It is estimated that about 300,000 electroconvulsive treatments alone were given in 1986, which is more than the combined total number of bypass surgeries, tonsillectomies, hernia repairs, and appendectomies performed, revealing that ECT was being abused and routinely given to others (Trends, 1995). The film industry made the public aware of this abuse, which permanently influenced the public's attitudes regarding it (Walter, 2004). ECT debuted in the film *The Snake Pit* in which Virginia Cunningham is forced to receive ECT until she showed signs of improvement (Walter, 2004). Although *The Snake Pit* planted the idea in the public's mind that ECT was something bad, it was the film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* that really convinced the public that ECT was truly an inhumane form of treatment (Walter, 2004). Upon receiving ECT without consent and without any anesthesia,

McMurphy is told that the process will not cause any pain and will be over in a minute, but McMurphy's grunts, heavy breathing, and seizures say otherwise. Soon after his seizure in a group therapy session he quickly comes back to life from being in a zombie-type state (Walter, 2004). *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* influenced the public's sentiments of ECT by claiming it is "a barbaric and unjustified tool for social control" because it is given to so many people, "but also as impotent and ineffective," and that is just how ECT is viewed today (Walter, 2004, p. 2). Because the media has such influence over society's life, society believes ECT is still conducted that way. However, the use of ECT today is the polar opposite of how it was used in the past and how the film industry portrays it. Today, ECT is only given to patients with affective and psychiatric disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. It is no longer abused by mental health professionals and no longer administered to just anybody. ECT is only administered to those who have been admitted to a hospital and who have failed to respond to medicinal treatment (Fink, 1991). It is evident that electroconvulsive therapy's use today is in fact ethical. ECT's use today is no longer like how it was used in the past. Today, ECT is no longer given randomly to anyone in a mental hospital without anesthesia. It is only given with anesthesia to those with affective or psychotic disorders.

The main argument in the debate of the ethics of ECT is whether ECT is effective. Psychiatrists claim it is, but what makes it effective? How can a seizure that creates random activity in the brain relieve mental states? How does electricity affect one's brain? (Barnes, 2008). The most accepted theory is "that ECT changes the inactive neurotransmitter systems involved those suffering from depression…[by creating]…an upsurge of energy in the brain, and therefore increase any or all of these neurotransmitters, resulting in an elevated mood…This neuro-stimulation and activation may have allowed for involuntary communication within the brain, and therefore the automatic reconnection of the mental processes and ultimate recovery" (Barnes, 2008. pp. 1-2). Modern ECT has been modified so that "treatments are given under anesthesia with ventilation and oxygen, with special attention to electrode placement, brief-pulse currents, and low doses of energy" (Fink, 1991, p. 2), for the best potential for recovery lies in electrode placement and how much electrical dose is used, as demonstrated in a double-blind study by Sackeim et al (1993). Ninety-six depressed patients were randomly assigned whether they would receive right unilateral or bilateral ECT at either a high dose or low dose of electrical current. Assessments of their depression symptoms and cognitive functioning were taken before, during, right after, and two months after therapy. The response rate recorded was the improvements in their symptoms and cognitive functioning. Those with low-dose unilateral therapy had a positive response rate of seventeen percent. Those with high-dose unilateral therapy had a response rate of forty-three percent. The response rate for low-dose bilateral therapy was sixty-five percent, while the response rate for high-dose bilateral treatment was sixty-three percent. The study revealed that ECT is effective for either high-dose unilateral treatment or low-dose bilateral treatment, but each one is effective in a different way. "To achieve

effects quicker it is suggested that bi-lateral ECT is used. Whereas to avoid memory loss and cognitive problems, uni-lateral (normally right-sided) ECT is more effective" (Dukakis, 2006, p. 4). Low-dose bilateral ECT is effective for improving one's mental state. High-dose unilateral ECT, on the other hand, is effective in avoiding memory loss. Nonetheless, no matter which way efficacy is measured, it is shown that ECT is effective when used properly, and therefore, ethical. It would be unethical to use ECT incorrectly while knowing in which ways it is beneficial to others.

As previously mentioned, electroconvulsive therapy is no longer a first-line treatment; it is only given to those who have not previously responded to other medication. ECT is now given as a last resort, a last option. When it may seem all hope is lost, ECT restores it, proving its effectiveness. That is what is just did for Anjie Roberts who suffered from severe depression (Hughes, 2005) and Michelle Ursy (Freedman, 2001) who suffered from bipolar disorder. Anjie Roberts had two ECT sessions after almost succeeding in her attempt to kill herself by taking a whole bottle of prescription insulin. She claims, "If it had not been for the ECT I don't believe I would be here to tell this story…I am not displeased in any way with the treatment" (Hughes, 2005, p. 4). Michelle Ursy attempted to commit suicide on several occasions (Freedman, 2001). No matter how many different types of medications she took, none of them were effective. She decided to receive ECT as a last resort. After a few ECT sessions, she began to feel happy and relieved from her depression. Unfortunately, after a few more sessions, her disorder returned. Although she was not permanently cured from her depression, she feels ECT was worthwhile; it gave her the opportunity to be happy once more and to remember what a happy life is like. ECT works when other medications have failed. The question should not be "Is receiving ECT is ethical?" The questions should be "Is it ethical to claim that ECT is not effective when it is proven otherwise? Is it ethical to try to convince others that ECT is something bad? Is it ethical to deny access to ECT when there is no other possible way to try to get better?" Usually when one admits to and acknowledges having a mental illness, he or she wants to become better and will do whatever he or she can to do so. If medication does not work, what else can that person do? They can either give up all hope or try electoconvulsive therapy. ECT is ethical because it provides others with the non-medicinal chance of becoming better; it provides hope for when all seems lost. It would be unethical to deprive others of this opportunity.

Another main concern about the ethics of ECT is in regards to the loss of memory that is a possible side effect of electroconvulsive therapy treatment. Studies have been conducted to test how memory is affected after receiving treatment. One study was conducted to inspect how unilateral or bilateral ECT affects verbal memory (Squire & Slater, 1978). Seventy-two people were assigned to three different groups: those in group one were prescribed bilateral ECT, those in group two were prescribed right-side unilateral ECT, and the third group was the control group who were only tested before ECT. Four different types of tests were administered, two verbal tests (story recall and short-term memory distracter

test) and two nonverbal tests (memory for geometric figure and spatial memory). All those who participated in the story recall test were able to remember the verbal material, but their responses were delayed. The results from the geometric figure test revealed that those who received unilateral ECT has their nonverbal memory impaired. The results from the short-term memory distractor test revealed that memory was impaired for only those who received bilateral ECT. The results from the spatial memory test revealed that memory was more significantly impaired by those who received bilateral ECT. The study shows that although memory is impaired, memory still continues to function. Another study showed that if memory is impaired, the patient is able to recover their memory, but it is not as good as it used to be (Squire, 2003); nevertheless, all memory was not lost. Because not all memory is lost and because memory can be restored, memory loss should not be a huge concern in determining if electroconvulsive therapy is ethical. Nonetheless, several people still have mixed feelings about the loss of memory in general. Anne Watkinson (2007), for example, has no doubts that ECT is unethical. Anne received ECT for her depression and lost two years of important memory. Now, with her family's help, she is beginning to fill in the missing information. Although she believes there is not enough research to prove that permanent memory loss is a guaranteed side effect of ECT, her experience convinces her that memory loss is a guaranteed side effect, and therefore, unethical. On the other hand, Kitty Dukakis received ECT after years of struggling with amphetamines, alcohol, and depression (Dukakis, 2006). Despite the small amount of memory she lost, ECT has helped to end her depression. She states, "The control ECT gives me over my disabling depression is worth this relatively minor cost…I was warned to expect them and…most of the memories come back" (Dukakis, 2006, p. 4). Eric, a musician who plays the viola, also suffered from depression and lost his desire to play music (Nevins & Rosenberg, 1996). After two years of psychotherapy, he decided to have ECT. His long-term memory was lost. Four months later, it was restored, his passion for music was ignited again, and he has not been depressed since. Like Kitty, Eric also believes that, despite the memory loss, ECT is both valuable and ethical. The aforementioned people had been made aware of the possible side effect of memory loss before receiving treatment. Those who claim that ECT is unethical because of memory loss have no right to do so. They need to bring to mind that when patients are made aware that they are going to receive treatment, the patients are also made aware of whatever side effects may occur, including memory loss. They also need to bring to mind that all of the patients' memories are not obliterated. Although some aspect of memory may be impaired, it will be restored in some way. Most importantly, those who claim ECT is unethical need to take the perspective of the patient and weigh their options. They need to consider what is more important, becoming better and ridding themselves of their burdensome and debilitating mental illness, or losing some of their memory, and they need to realize that the new studies and facts regarding memory loss clearly demonstrate that ECT is indeed ethical.

There are several different arguments that are heard when talking about

the ethics of electroconvulsive therapy: It is too violent; muscle relaxants and anesthesia is not given, patients are forced to receive ECT, ECT is ineffective, and memory loss is a debilitating side effect of ECT. However, all of these arguments are incorrect. In the past, the use of ECT was cruel, inhumane, and unethical, administered without anesthesia and muscle relaxants because they did not exist at the time. Most of the time, ECT was ineffective. Today, on the other hand, electroconvulsive treatment is different. Today, the procedure is performed properly, with anesthesia and muscle relaxants. With high-dose unilateral or low-dose bilateral treatment, ECT is effective treatment for patients who have not responded well to other medications for their mental illness. Although there is a risk of memory loss when receiving the procedure, memory is restored. It is evident that today's use of electroconvulsive therapy is ethical.

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Utopia in Modern America

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FWS 3

The fictional society of Utopia as created by Thomas More in his renowned novel Utopia is one based on complete cooperation and dedication from the inhabitants to benefit the whole of their society. Everyone that lives on the island of Utopia has a role that ultimately contributes back to its sustainability. There is no sense of an oppressive hierarchy; everyone is essentially equal, working together to create what Thomas More depicts as an ideal world. A society such as this could unfortunately never succeed in More's Western European world much less in modern America for a number of reasons. Primarily, the capitalistic society that has existed in America since the eighteenth century by definition compromises More's Utopian ideas. Americans are accustomed to competition and pride as it is encouraged in our society through coveted monetary and social rewards. Americans would simply not give up their possessions, status, or ambition to lead simpler, more community-based lives.

The driving force behind Americans' success in society lies fundamentally in the values of capitalism. According to Webster's New World College Dictionary capitalism is defined as "an economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution, as land, factories, communications, and transportation systems, are privately owned and operated in a relatively competitive environment through the investment of capital to produce profits: it has been characterized by a tendency toward the concentration of wealth, the growth of large corporations, etc. that has led to economic inequality, which has been dealt with usually by increased government action and control" (Webster, Pg. 217). Present day America continues to operate by this definition of capitalism; success in our society is equated with capitalistic success, which is based on individual investment, profit, and competition. The philosophy behind America's capitalist society is polar opposite of More's commonwealth civilization. In Utopia the driving force behind the Utopian's actions lies completely in their religion and the prospect of an eternally joyful afterlife. They believe that "after this life punishments are ordained for vices and rewards for virtues...For who can doubt that someone who has nothing to fear but the law and no hope of anything beyond bodily existence would strive to evade the public laws of his country by secret chicanery or to break them by force in order to satisfy his own personal greed?" (More, Pg. 119). American capitalism and Utopian religion can easily be equated here due to the fact that they respectively set the standards for behavior and operation within their societies. The rudimentary values and structures of Utopia and America are based on opposite ideas which ultimately prevents the incorporation of Utopian ideas into American society from being successful.

Understanding in greater detail how certain aspects of the respective nations function serves as further evidence to the claim that successfully establishing Utopian ideals would be impossible in America. Houses, for example, are assigned to families by a lottery every ten years in Utopia. All of

the houses have a front door and garden door. There are limitations set on the number of adults each household is permitted. "They see to it that no household... has fewer than ten or more that sixteen adults...This limit is easily maintained by transferring persons from households with too many people to those with too few" (More, Pg. 66). Americans would undoubtedly object to a system of housing where every dwelling is the same and limitations are set on the number of residents. It is written in the United States Constitution's fourth amendment that "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated." This amendment prevents the government from unreasonably controlling the possessions or households of Americans. This right to protection, guaranteed to the American people, is not one likely to be given up in the name of uniformity. It would be difficult to convince Americans that limiting household members is a necessary measure to take for ensuring societal success.

Thomas More's Utopian logic puts most of Modern America's practices to shame in that it acknowledges the superfluous nature of the American lifestyle. Due to the overwhelming sense of pride that exists in American society, it is unlikely that Americans would appreciate much less conform to a philosophy that portrays their way of life as inordinate and frivolous. Examining the different attitudes towards fashion offers one with a good sense of this notion. In Utopia, their clothing "is uniform throughout the island for all age groups and varies only to indicate sex or marital status" (More, Pg. 60). This eliminates the temptations of vanity and greed, keeping Thomas More's ideals intact within the civilization. The Utopians feel that "there is no reason why [one] should want any more [than a single garment], for if he got them he would have no more protection against the cold, and his clothing would not look the least bit more fashionable" (More, Pg. 65). For Americans, however, purchasing clothing is an investment one makes frequently to physically promote their status in society. Clothing has become an expression of one's self; it is easy to pass judgments on someone based solely on their clothing and appearance since the option to be fashionable is available to everyone. Because variety exists in American society, not only in fashion but in numerous other areas, there is a focus on the development of individuals which has no place in the Utopian way of life. Thomas More explains that "fear of want makes all kinds of animals greedy and rapacious, but only mankind is made so by pride, which makes them consider their own glory enhanced if they excel others in displaying superfluous possessions; in the Utopian scheme of things there is no place for such a vice" (More, Pg. 68). Because Americans are given choices, they develop a desire to explore their options which, as More points out, leads to pride and the demise of unity (which would also be the demise of More's commonwealth). For this reason, Utopian ideals could not effectively exist in Modern America because of our foundation in individualism.

Over time there have been various social experiments (such as the American Shakers or Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti) developed to test the effects of living in accordance to Utopian ideals. Widely the experiments have failed due to the presence of human nature. There is an irresistible desire within humans to

better themselves, an innate ambition perhaps that is suppressed by More's theory that people would willingly abandon their ambition for the sake of a common good. The Untied States as a nation functions in accordance with the idea that if one has a will to succeed, one will find a way to succeed. For centuries immigrants have flocked to America to seek out its many opportunities for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In Utopia, however, the focus of society is not on the individual's will, but instead on the will of the community. The prosperity of the Utopian world relies completely on the unanimous understanding that every good deed performed in the earthly life will be rewarded in an eternally joyous afterlife. Their commonwealth society is grounded in the understanding that "where there is no private property, everyone works seriously for the public good" (More, Pg. 130). More acknowledges that due to the uncontrollable forces of human nature (specifically pride) a world like Utopia could never succeed outside of the island. "And in fact I have no doubt that everyone's concern for his own well-being or the authority of our savior Christ...would long since have easily drawn the whole world to adopt the laws of this commonwealth, if it were not held back by one and only one monster, the prince and parent of all plagues, pride" (More, Pg. 133).

Aside from the differing details of how America functions versus how Utopia functions, the ultimate reason why a Utopian way of life would fail in Modern America is that there is a lack of faith in a supreme being in today's society. The separation of church and state in the American government prevents our society from investing ourselves in a greater, more lasting cause. Our lives do not solely focus on religion and faith, instead they focus on personal gain and are used to measure our success against the success of others (success being primarily defined as monetary status). Ambition and pride do not lead directly to the demise of human benevolence but over time the investment in these virtues leads individuals to lose sight of the purposes behind their ambition. The moment that humans abandon the fact that they are imperfect and created in the image of one supreme being, all hope for a commonwealth is lost. Americans are incredibly vulnerable to the temptations of insignificant material gain and for this basic reason Thomas More's Utopian world could never actually exist in ours.

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Creative Non-Fiction

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."
St. Augustine

Jeans and Kisses

Dominic Romero

My main goal when I got to Europe was to fit in. I did not want to stick out like an ignorant American walking around the piazza with a ten gallon cowboy hat, and an American flag across the back of my jean jacket. I wanted to seamlessly integrate enough so that I could pass as a European. My secret goal was to be able to walk through the piazza and have real Italians believe that I was one of them. It's not that I am ashamed of being American, but I wanted the personal satisfaction of tricking people into thinking I was European.

The first step to Europeanization was dressing like them. Now, it is safe to say that I have no fashion sense; or as my Mom says, I have a "unique and comfortable style." I pretty much wear whatever I like and whatever makes me comfortable. To give some insight into my fashion (non)sense: back in the states I have an extensive collection of T-shirts, each one quirkier than the other. One of my most prized possessions is my t-shirt collection of the General Mills Cereal mascots: Tony the Tiger, Lucky the leprechaun from Lucky Charms, Smacks the frog. The peak of my fashion deficiency manifests itself in the form of my shorts. I wear the same style of shorts everyday: kaki cargo shorts. I have four identical pairs so that there is never a day that I won't be without my cargos.

Needless to say, I went into slight shock when I got to Italy and saw everyone wearing nothing but labels: Armani, Fendi, Prada. I was even more surprised to see that everyone was wearing gold and silver colored shoes. It looked like the Italians were space-people colonizing Earth one handbag at a time. I enlisted the help of a fashionista friend of mine to help me to interpret the complicated language of fashion. The first thing she did was try to burn my kaki's; she almost had a heart attack when she saw that I had three backups in case she was successful. She informed me that jeans were a sleeker look and would help me in my quest of integration. We spent an entire day, and hundreds of Euros, popping around shops; but by the end of the day, I looked like an Italian.

My new "euro" style took some getting used to. I realized that I would no longer be able to just wake up, roll out of bed, and go to class. I now had to worry about things I never thought I would: no black shoes with a brown belt, you cannot mix two different patterns etc. The strangest thing part of all was that despite the hassle it was in the morning, I kind of liked it. I enjoyed the feeling of taking pride in what I wore; it gave a boost to my confidence.

I had the look down, but now I needed to work on looking like I knew how to act around Italians. The only thing I knew about Europe before I got here was that everyone liked to kiss each other's cheeks. Now, as much as this idea intrigued me, I also became very preoccupied when thinking about it too much. Is there a secret code as to when to kiss someone and when not to? Would I kiss my teacher? Do I kiss another man upon first meeting? When? When? When?

One day I became too frustrated to think about it any longer I so I called one of the wisest people I know, my sister. She had studied abroad in Spain and was very euro-knowledgeable. She had informed me that I was stressing over something so small that it was ridiculous. She told me that the answer to my question was simple: "Europeans kiss each other whenever they leave or are saying hello." She also told me that I don't have to kiss anyone that I didn't want to. She said to just do it whenever I feel like it.

I didn't want to seem like an out of place American so I had decided that once I made a real Italian friend I could plant a very friendly "nice to meet you, I am not an ignorant American" kiss on their cheeks.

I decided before practicing the real thing on an Italian, I would warm up on another American student. I figured that this was a good plan in case I had messed it up they would not know the difference.

So one night after leaving my friend Shannon's apartment for dinner I decided to make my move. As she walked me out to the door, I went for it. She had immediately understood what I was doing and decided to reciprocate. (I was so thankful that there did not have to be any verbalization of me saying, "Ok, so…um…now I am going to kiss your cheek…you know…like the Italians do it.") So as our faces inched closer, time seemed to slow down, and I realized another problem I had never asked my sister about: what side do I chose? Panic-stricken, I closed my eyes and darted left. All I felt was the collision of our foreheads. I had opened up my eyes and saw Shannon's face staring at me. My eyes widened, and we both let out a huge laugh. I apologized for the facial-fender-bender, hugged her, and left.

Even though the first attempt was not successful, it did not discourage me. Shannon and I attempted another go of it the next night after dinner. Although neither one of us was said anything, we were both thinking about it. I decided that the error was my own; I should have weaved right instead of going left. So, just like the night before, she walked me out, and I went it. This time, I kept my eyes open and alert and I moved to the right. Our cheeks gently touched as we made the kissing noise. It was a success. I left Shannon's apartment that night feeling like a million bucks. I knew that I was ready for the real thing.

That weekend I had gone to a little Irish pub with some friends. We had spoken to the bartender all night and hit it off. The bartenders name was Lilliana and she was a local Perugian. She was really sweet all night; giving us free drinks and helping us practice our Italian. As we were begging to leave, I decided that Lillian would be the lucky recipient of my first Italian salutation. I leaned over the bar, and again chose to move right, and felt our cheeks softly touch. It felt so good because it had gone off without incident. I left that bar, with a new, genuine, Italian friend, and a boost in my confidence.

From that time on, I kiss everyone. I feel like this custom helps to make people feel like you have a genuine connection with them; almost like the ultimate sense of comfort. I feel complimented whenever I am having a conversation with someone new and we can end our conversation with gentle kisses on the cheek. It makes me feel like we had a successful interaction, and that now we are friends.

Not shortly after kissing Lilianna, I was out one night walking back to my apartment, when I someone flagged me down. It was an Italian girl looking for directions to Shamrocks. She asked me where it was in Italian, assuming I was Italian. It made my day. I acted cool like it happens all the time, pointed out the way to her and she left. It was as though my Euro-mission was complete: I had been mistaken for a local.

I realized that the key to surviving in a foreign country is to immerse yourself in the culture. Living like an Italian, made me feel like I was not a tourist visiting Italy but a resident. Had I kept to my American dress and customs I would have missed out on the complete Italian experience. By living like an Italian I not only got to experience the culture, but I got to learn about the art of fashion, and the power of a kiss.

Menagerie of life on the streets of Morocco
Originally Printed in the Quaker Campus
Bryanna Benedetti

The rhythm of the music keeps time with the racing of my heart as I soak in the sights and sounds and smells of the cramped medina streets. Drums beat as the call to prayer from the mosque ahead is mixed with the rap music flowing out from a music shop. Hundreds of colors swirl around me as my eyes scan the narrow lanes I pass, and the smell of orange oil mixed with burning incense reaches my nose. I glance through the crowd, in awe of the bustling interactions taking place – bargaining, laughing, crying, learning, and living. I place the viewfinder to my right eye and snap a progression of candid photos, trying to capture all the beauty and life within one moment. It is simply impossible. Human senses are simply not equipped to handle this much living.

Morocco is a country of mystery and oriental intrigue to most Americans. We see Humphrey Bogart wooing Ingrid Bergman while fighting Nazis in Casablanca, picture men in long blue turbans riding camels through the desert like in the film Lawrence of Arabia (which was filmed in Morocco), and flocks of women covered in black headscarves. But do we really know the real Morocco?

This January, for the first time, Whittier College sent a group of students to Morocco for Jan Term. The group, team taught by Gary Libman and Marilyn Gottschall, spent three weeks in the north-east city of Fez, living with Moroccan families, studying colloquial Moroccan Arabic, and discovering what it is to be Moroccan. Although we had taken a course in the fall to make us knowledgeable of the history and culture of Morocco, nothing could have prepared us for the rich culture we were submerged into. Here are the top 10 most interesting things we learned about while in Morocco:

(10) Transportation. Camels are not the normal mode of transportation. Contrary to popular movies, most Moroccans do not ride camels on a daily basis. Morocco is a modern developing country, driving old Mercedes and European-made cars through the city. In the old medina, however, cars do not fit in the narrow streets, so donkeys and motorbikes are seen frequently.

(9) Languages. Most people our group encountered spoke more than two languages! In Morocco, classical Arabic and French are taught in schools from a very young age, because both languages are national languages, and colloquial Arabic (Darija) is spoken at home. When entering into secondary school, students are given the option of more languages, including Spanish and Berber (the native North African language). In my household in Morocco, Classical Arabic, French, Darija, and English were all understood and basically spoken.

(8) Henna. Henna is a type of natural dye that is used to color hair and decorate hands and feet with intricate designs. Only women wear or use henna, usually during festive celebrations such as marriages. More and more it is becoming a tradition of the past, as many younger Moroccan women look towards Europe and stop using traditional henna.

(7) Food. All I can say is bread, bread, and more bread! Every meal is eaten with bread, with tea or coffee. Pork is not eaten in Morocco because it is forbidden in Islam, but Chicken and Beef is common. Lunch is the biggest meal of the day, like

Europe, and children come home from school to eat with the family. Most meals are eaten off of one mutual plate, with bread being used as a type of utensil, instead of forks. Moroccan tea is served with every meal and most families finish lunch with some type of citrus.

(6) Dress. The styles in Morocco are very westernized and diverse. Most people in the younger generation wear similar clothing to those in Europe and America, with modesty guiding their tastes. It is unusual to see girls in skimpy clothing, but it is not unheard of in some of the larger cities. Headscarves are common, but not mandatory, and many women opt not to wear them. Others pick out colorful scarves and pin them with flashy brooches, adding a western style to the traditional garment. Most men take up the European styles, with "fake" designer jeans being a popular wear as well as French-style barretts.

(5) Music. Music is very popular and diverse in Moroccan culture. Moroccans have adopted much of the Western music, such as Akon and Celine Dion (both extremely popular), but have also stuck to their African roots. At any given cd shop, one can find Western and Moroccan forms of rap, hip hop, rock, and heavy metal, European pop, Chaabi and Arabic dance mixes, recordings of the Qur'an, and Sufi mystical music. Each has their own place in society and music frequents the streets where ever you are.

(4) Hammam. A hammam is a public bath house where Moroccan men and women (at separate times) go to wash off, clean up, and gossip with friends. Most of the group was able to experience the hammam at least once during our trip. There are three rooms – a cold room, a warm room, and a hot room – with benches lining the walls. Water is brought to you as you sit on the benches and, using a cup, you wash and soak in the water and steam that fills the room. People usually stay in for hours and, for women, this is an arena for socializing that they do not usually have out on the streets.

(3) The medina. The old neighborhood of every city in Morocco, the medina is the center of Moroccan life. The medina is usually a neighborhood of narrow, twisty streets, used to confuse the colonizers and tourists alike. Within the medina you will find anything you are looking for from shoes to food to tea pots. Within each medina, there are areas for different types of craftsmanship, usually with a fountain and mosque nearby.

(2) The call to prayer. This was one of my fondest memories of Morocco. The call to prayer is recited from every mosque minaret in Morocco, which is usually about every mile or so away from one another. The call is done five times a day, in accordance with the second Islamic pillar. The verse begins, "Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest. God is the Greatest.)" and ends with "la ilaha illallah (There is no God but Allah.)" The call to prayer is the profession of the first pillar of Islam, which is the profession of the faith.

(1) The people. The best thing about Morocco is its people. Moroccans are some of the nicest people I have ever met. They will go out of their way to help a stranger and treat every person they encounter as their brother. In the public sphere, people may come off as rude and pushy, but really this is just the way to get around. There are no such things as lines, just pushing, yet there I never once saw anyone get angry. Instead, they are kind in almost all aspects of life. These people exemplify what it means to be a good neighbor, whether the neighbor is from another town or another country.

Art

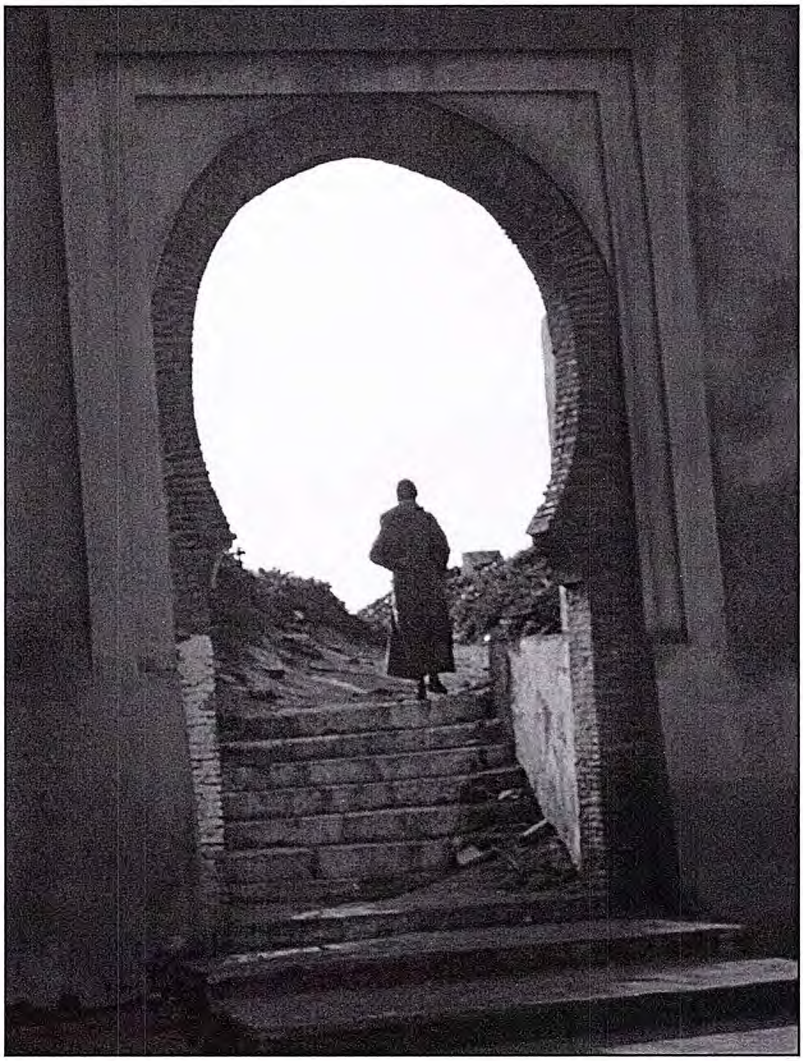
"Art isn't everything. It's just about everything."
Gertrude Stein

Obidience, Shiprock New Mexico July 2008
Leslie King

Civilization, Arizona July 2008
Leslie King

The Process of Decay, New Mexico July 2008
Leslie King

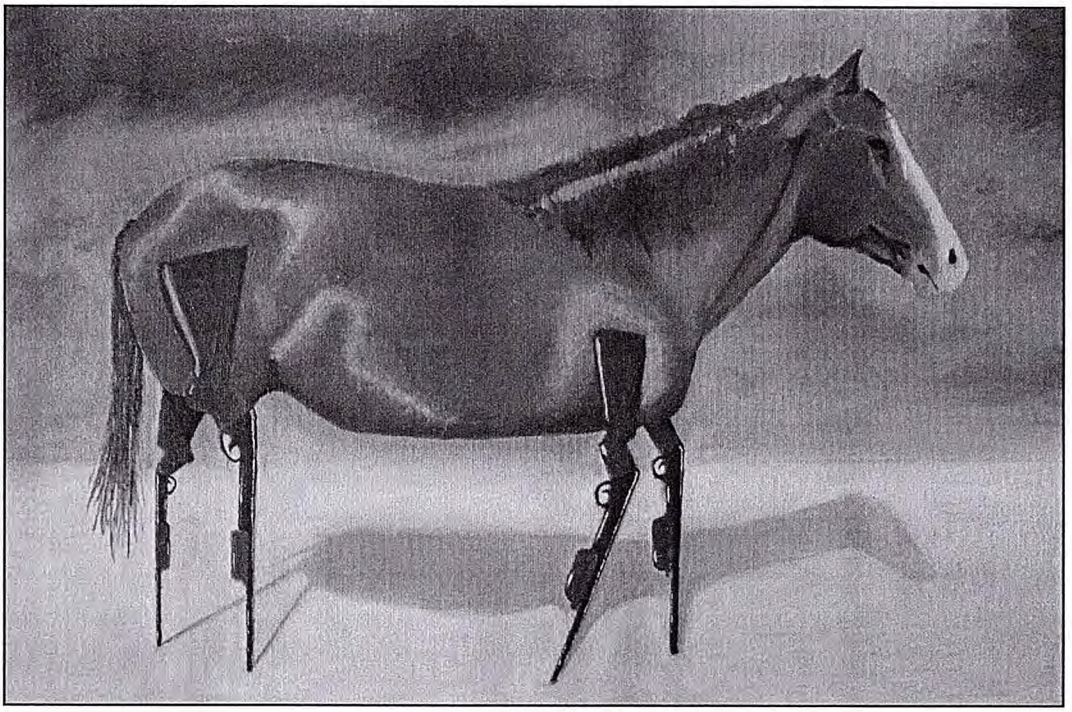
i share, Colorado July 2008
Leslie King



Allah Hu Akbar, 2009
Bryanna Benedetti

To Have A Dream, 2008
Bryanna Benedetti

Afrocentricity, felt tip pen on paper
Farrin Ochoa



Horse
Callan Martinez

Poetry

Newsom Poetry Awards:

The Newsom Award in Poetry is given for the best student work in the genre and is named after Roy Newsom, a former Whittier president. Current students from all departments may submit up to three poems to be considered; English department faculty members judge submissions blind and separately. Traditionally, there are first, second, and third place winners, and this year there are additionally two honorable mentions.

Yours

Newsone First Place

Martina Miles

On my birthday, I receive the message from you.
"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you..."
Lilting notes I know well – the song from your lips that I have heard each Halloween sung to me. And maybe on that first Halloween, too. Maybe you held me in your bed that first day, after I had been spat and pushed into the world, after you had agonized to let me breathe my first free air and untied me from your womb, maybe you sang that song to me there. Soft whispered singing from your exhausted heart into the nautilus of my brand new ear.

On the machine you finish your song.
"It's your mother."
As if I might not know. As if all the confusion and cacophony in the world could obscure your voice from me. As if I have not memorized the sound of you – your mother's voice first, which all newborns turn their tiny miracle heads to the sound of, then to your gavotte gait, your legato laugh, your soprano silence. As if you did not train my *piano* voice to sing *forte*. As if I have not memorized the concerto you. As if it you do not stick in my head, an adagio I hum to myself.

As if on that first day after you expelled me from the warmth of you and let me loose into this discordant world, on that first day when you must have mourned in your celebration of cutting me away from your body, you did not *a capella* into my pitched heart and weave a metronome bond stronger than the incus, malleus, and stapes; stronger than the canon you taught be me hear; stronger than the movements of clef and tenor; stronger than the God you trilled me to rejoice; stronger than the first octave and first opus and first opera. Stronger than the carol of heavens and the requiem of earth: a gold filament note, ringing a melodic thread between your heart and mine.

As if I am not first and forever
Yours.

Last Moment

Newsome Second Place

Martina Miles

smell of rainwater evaporating off asphalt and picking guitar strings in the dark and taste of molasses cookies barefoot in the kitchen and thrum of the cord we struck together it vibrates through me till I am here and I am now and I know that I will not be able to hold onto it but I am remembering and I wish I were not remembering what I am leaving but I can feel his arm around me and my face on his chest and the mist the golden mist the echo of everything I need – my grandfather's hand on the brass hands of the grandfather clock and the Golden Gate with the setting sun turning waves to gilded flax and the yellow in my mother's hair and the possibility the possibility the rusting possibility of sitting in silence and letting it wash over me and I am holding onto this for one last minute, the weight of rock in my hands and my copper hair trailing behind me in the water and do not leave me now do not leave me now I have so much more to do the pages of thick books and the smell of ink and the feel of throat vibrating with words and my head, my head on his chest and the beat of his red heart so steady and so loud and his hands on my stomach and the possibility the possibility of

Trenton Boogie

Newsome Third Place

Alexander Johnson

In a place where Hell lives,
full of the fire and the fury
of its people,
broken and hopeful,
    there is a moan on the air.
In a place where Hell lives,
a man, woman and child's
field of vision only extends
to the end of the block,
    but for the few that see Hell
    and won't let its ashen eyes and shut out,
    crippled mind keep them there,
a coldstone resolve and jailbreak plot
gestates and blooms.
In a place where Hell lives
and mothers no longer weep for or wonder
where their sons are, or care
if the sun rises on their daughters
in a bed
or in a crumbled brick alley;
    this is the place
    that tamed time, also,
    calls home.

In a place where Hell lives and the
Capital lies, there is a graveyard
of wrought iron tombstones and high grass.
A graveyard where squirrels crack their nuts
and hide them away for a long winter
in nooks clawed out by the infirm
that wander the streets.
In a place where Hell lives and the
Capital lies, Death runs a monopoly
on transportation and taxes:
    a transit center,
glittering new and appropriated,
complete with facades nearly as slick
as he and fare options offering
cost-effective misery.
    With a river line that takes those

who want a change of scenery to
his overzealous Greek cousin's
watershed caves and clubs,
its scenic path along the Styx
always
gives them their money's worth;
twofold.
And then a bus line,
cruelest in its design, only to traffic its souls
to and from their medieval racks
and interrogation cells,
giving them the illusion of escaping
the place where Hell lives and the
Capital lies.

A place hideous and strange,
but uniquely Americana;
a place where crossroads meet.
All of it rushing and timeless, but
never without a time schedule.
And on the corner of it all is
The Owner, Pete.
He's been a kind of father figure
for all the grown up kids with
liquor kicking through their families;
a low-budget, no-refund psychologist.
His peat-black lion's mane
fell out way back when, but
you can see it in its glory
in a picture behind the bar, from
when he was in the papers
for beating his wife.
He still sneers and spits, "She never
Should have tried to leave."

In a place where Hell lives
I watch love and anger, howling destruction
and high-rise concrete reconstruction,
beauty and insecticide
run rampant in the streets.
And I know, for now,
this is home.

In Order

Newsome Honorable Mention

Martina Miles

On nights when our Mommy
Would be out late at choir,
Or off on a work trip,
Or retreat with her friends
Rachel and I would stay together in our room and play quiet
In a neat little circle on the spotted blue rug.

On the carpet the pieces
Of my new big-kid puzzle
Refused to stay together and
Would slowly drift apart
Till the eyes of the kittens were askance and lolling
Like the eyes of the dead bird we once found in the back.
And I just couldn't make them stay just where they're meant to
And would silently will them to just do what I said
And would wait without question till I just could'nt bear it
Then would gather the pieces by order of color
And number of sides and arrange them in circles
And put them away in the big box they came in
And carry it slowly so things might stay in order
And wait really patient for things to be calm.

And after our dinners Rachel'd help me get ready
Then gently we'd ask, for the first time that evening,
If please you could maybe
Sing a song before sleeping
Because that's what we're used to from how Mommy does it.
And if you were sitting in the hall with the light on
You could sing Christopher Robin and play on your guitar.
And we promise we'd like it and both would feel better
And we'd be really quiet and not ask for kisses
Or a light in the closet
Or a straw to drink milk with.

But no matter how sweetly we'd asked or entreated
You'd just raise your voice and demand we please listen
Because you'd had a long day and needed your quiet
And you're not our Mother so don't ask again Goddammit
And if you two children don't stop begging this instant –

But by then I'd slipped like a ghost through the doorways

And while the storm raged I could sit tight and safely
As Rachel rejoindered with her loud voice and gumption
And he threw a chair or shattered a wineglass.
But I'd gone out the window that went from my bedroom
Onto the cold porch and into the backyard.
And if the moon'd risen I'd have enough I could see with
And climb up the blue ladder
From ground floor to skylight
Of the big ancient oak tree with bark just like challah.

And inside the tree the leaves felt just like velvet
And I could see over the roofs of the houses
And clear past the city and into the ocean
And if it things were perfect I'd see right to the Gateway
The shining Golden arch that lit up with headlights
As the cars still went streaming from Berkeley to the City
And onto points north as far as they needed.

But I would grow frightened of the changing of shadows
And the shifting and calling of night-dwelling creatures
Till I climbed from the branches and down the blue rope
And crept through the grass that felt just like a jungle
And crawled back in the window to see if you'd noticed
And into my bed where I'd sing all the lyrics
Of the songs I remembered
With a soft tuneless cadence
So nobody'd notice and make me feel silly
For being so little and needing so much.

On the edge of time with a man called lonely

Newsome Honorable Mention

Brandon Halcomb

another one down
devilshaped glass and liquidblush
all in tact with days passed
led down a somber path until i'm
sitting on the edge of time with a man called
Lonely
we exchange a glance or
two
[never words]
and the cobwebs that float by
are only
food
for thought
that we ingest to
pass the time

where is she now?
somehow i have not repressed her wigs
or the excessive spending
or the drinking
or the drugs
but still i wonder:
where is she now?
did she find jesus like she'd wanted
is she still alive?
did she ever learn?
could the death of a [friend] affect her?
i have so many questions,
as often i do when i spend time with Lonely.
but these are the words that are
never
spoken
the missing peoples and missing numbers
broken relationships and tattered
histories
we are one and the same now
as i get closer to Lonely with
this fluid
{time is}
always forward
and Lonely is still
alone.

Amma and Appa: Life as Puja

Dorothy Tunnell

Every day Amma wakes when the moon

Falls into the Earth and the sun's rising sensations.

The bell rings in the puja room for Vishnu

And the picture of her sister stands beside the gods.

She wears an unstarched, purple cotton sari

Falls into the Earth and rising sensations

And then begins her daily "works" in the home

And the picture of her sister still stands beside the gods.

Her sweet gestures in the kitchen swim into an unbearable aroma

Falls into the Earth and rising sensations

And every day, Appa picks crimson hibiscus as offerings

And the picture of her sister still stands beside the gods.

Sonnet 1

Tristan Churchia

What fools we are to waste such precious time,
for we demand that which we cannot keep
and mirthful times expire as must our prime
fade swiftly while we at our wrinkles weep.
For just as Night's black cloak conceals clear day
in shrouds of deepest black, most cursed of hues,
and Winter's frost devours new life of May,
what things are flush and fair will pay their dues.
But do not fear: though paid this debt must be,
of all our moments none may be in vain
if each be more prized than transitory
things, those from which we have nothing to gain.
Thus, take great heed to all your heart's desires,
And do all that your happiness requires.

Scholarship

Alexander Johnson

I should be up all night reading Whitman,
chewing a cud of his leaves.
I should be uncovering all my insanities and
spending extended vacations in Hell with Rimbaud.
I should be discovering my own blackness with Hughes
and figuring out why Maya's caged bird sang.
I should be reveling in my workingman's blues with
Carver and up all night drinking with René Dumal.
I should be awakening next to Kate Chopin in her
white chamise, a pale breast exposed to the morning.
I should be ecstatic in the poison like Andrew Hudgkins,
chasing trucks filled with ether and DDT.
I should be willing and able to stop-time, drop everything
at a moment's notice and make jazz with my teeth.
I should be doing a lot of things
a scholar ought to do…
I should be writing this all down.

For Chan Marshall

Alexander Johnson

Keys and chords
rise up from the kitchen to
their bedroom, quietly at first.
Soon, they reverberate off
the diamond patterned linoleum,
reaching his ears as ghost notes
and words he'd thought she'd forgotten.
They tell him he's done nothing wrong
and that the rain she's conjured
is not for him, that it's not for the things
he's left unsaid or for
the sense of things
once shared.

The Lonesome Shore

Shannon Jaime

Tugging, turning tides
Gathering stones into the clear;
Grains of sand upon irises of blue,
And white wings soaring on salty swirls—
To fly,
To cry for the lonesome shore

Speak softly, butterfly

Shannon Jaime

Speak softly, butterfly,
In a whisper of wings;
Caress the night's sweet shadows
And stir the shallow waters
With quiet, silky grace.

Heart

Shannon Jaime

Below the pipe that plays the wind,
Above the acid sea,
Is the place where pain begins:
It thrums, it thrums in me.

Right of limb and left of lung,
Sealed by seams and skin,
Sings a song too often sung:
It hums, it hums within.

Far from wounds which do not bleed,
Behind the cage of bone,
Weeps the wood with strings that plead:
It strums, it strums alone.

Crimson bright and scarlet sweet,
With lightning flash and thunder beat,
Drums the red rogue drearily
The rhythm cruel of misery.

And so it comes, and so it goes;
And oh, it knows my woes,

It knows.

Polaroid

Farrin Ochoa

Kodak Film, 1978. Polaroid.
A few words and a made-up year.

They sit on my grandmother's striped lovebird sofa.
It's night. I know this because the curtains are drawn
And my grandmother closed them only at sun down.

Two bronze children in their early twenties
With dark brown wild hair stare love drunk into
Each others' native eyes.

The young skin of their faces
Is stretched and dimpled because their mouths have
Remained frozen in a snapshot with smiles
That seem infinite, for thirty years.
The future had never occurred to them.

Who ever took the picture
Of this Romeo and this Juliet never needed to exist.
In the grounds of this photograph
Nothing isn't obvious.

Each time I come across this picture
There still never seem to be any
Correct words to describe the way it spins my head;
Only correct feelings.

2008. They still stare.

Chicken Scratch

Jessica Jacquez

Shuffling through illegible memories of us
that were once the most lucid part of my life,
I stumbled on a piece of notebook paper
folded into a neat little heart.

"To my one and only" scribbled on the face of it
in your chicken scratch.

I can't say I was the slightest bit delighted
to find it, but suddenly the stray marks
were no longer an annoyance
because I could still make
words out of your indecipherable penmanship.

Jealous Sky

Jessica Jacquez

It was the plum
and pale blue pigment
of the jealous sky
that broke the
enveloping skin
of the cirrus clouds
-each one curled
inward in an effort to
bleed as one-
that lifted me out
of my adolescent trance,
until I could see for the
first time; everything
broken and morose.

Peregrinations and Merrymaking

Catherine King

In a trouble-brewing springtime in the old and great of Ring-time
Far across the rushing Brandywine and even Rauros' foam
Oh of terror there was plenty, this was ere old fourteen-twenty
And two hobbits from the gentry were on sending far from home
    Bruised and weary to the bone,
    Far from ingleside and home

With the orcs behind them fighting tall horse-men of the Twilighting
Scouring off the sour blighting from the Rohan's flowery field
Into Fangorn Wood they hurried, Merry, Pippin, how they scurried
In the darkling flickered verdigris they skirted being kee-illed,
    They took Fangorn for their shield
    That with mist and moss was fee-illed

As they passed over the water, faded then the sounds of slaughter
And the two breathed easy maugre being sundered from their kin
Though the tulgy wood was verdant both eagles and crows they heard and
Against the high-green curtain climbed they up to see the fen
When they met the oldest Ent,
Treebeard, Bombadillo's friend

How they came to walk with giants, with them walked to war, defiant
How they built a vow reliant to be friends forevermore
All this story I will tell you, if you let me once be-spell you,
Spell you with a tale of hobbits bravest of the folk of yore
    A time of the long before,
    On the fields of white Gondor…

Mashed Potatoes

Melody Gandy

You see, the problem with you is that you simply don't care.
No, really. You don't.
If you did in fact care, about anything other than yourself or advancing
in tomorrow night's pool league, you would have noticed
all the effort I put into tonight. For example,
when was the last time I made you dinner? I mean
really made dinner. This wasn't an ordinary grilled cheese
affair like last Thursday. If you would look up from the TV
for a minute you would see that there are mashed potatoes
with actual gravy right there in front of you. Homemade.
And those steaks aren't dry pieces of meat
I burned on the stove top like I did last weekend.
I grilled them outside on the patio while you were in the living room
yelling at Master Chief to "kill the damn thing already".
It was freezing outside, by the way.
So, you can understand why when you said you were going
to try and make it to the 9-ball match tonight before the cut off
and if I could please hurry up with the ice cream so you could go,
I was a little annoyed.
I made a pie, you bastard.

Poème d'amour

Erica Travers

Je sais que vous ne m'avez pas tout montré, Paris.
Toute une génération s'est perdue dans vos rues étroites.
Qui serais-je de croire que je vous connais?
De penser, même pendant un moment de doute,
que vous n'avez plus rien à m'offrir?

De temps en temps, je me promène à Montmartre avec les touristes.
Je prends des photos, et essaie de saisir chaque petit secret que vous me dites.
Vous me répondez en silence.

Mais je vous aime sans condition.
C'est vrai que la Tour Eiffel ne me dit rien,
mais vous avez tout un dialogue séducteur et bien rôdé caché dans les moindres détails de notre vie.

Je vous écoute !

Et donc! Que restera-t-il de nos six mois ?
Un petit appart au cinquième étage,
tout de pastel et parfumé de cigarettes,
ou un café quelconque dans le 5e ?
Les piqueniques au bord d'un lac serein dans le Bois de Boulogne,
ou les grandes avenues,
débordantes de monde à 3 heures du matin pendant la Nuit Blanche?

Vous ne cessez jamais de m'étonner, Paris.
Notre rencontre s'est vite passée,
et je suis obligée de retourner aux États-Unis,
des souvenirs impuissants à l'esprit,
et l'assurance de savoir que vous me manquerez toujours…

Love Poem

I know you didn't show me everything, Paris.
An entire generation lost itself in your narrow streets.
Who would I be to believe that I know you?
To think, even in a moment of doubt,
that you have nothing left to offer?

From time to time, I go for walks in Montmartre with the tourists.
I take my photos, trying to capture each little secret that you tell me.
I am met with silence.

But I love you unconditionally.
It's true that the Eiffel Tour does not speak to me,
but you have an entire dialogue, seductive and well-practiced, hidden in all the tiny details of our life.

I'm listening!

And so! What will be left of our six months?
A tiny apartment on the sixth floor,
all in pastel and smelling of cigarettes,
or an unremarkable café in the 5ième?
Picnics at the serene lakesides of the Bois de Boulogne,
or the grand avenues,
overrun with people at 3 in the morning the night of Nuit Blanche?

You never cease to surprise me, Paris.
Our affair was too short,
and I am obliged to return home,
plagued by these impotent memories,
and the too heavy knowledge that I will always miss you…

Le ciel d'hiver

Erica Travers

Je suis montée sur le toit
cette nuit avec l'intention de me noyer
dans le ciel froid d'hiver.

Mais tu m'as rejoint,
et j'ai perdu toutes ces idées
dans tes yeux, chaleureux
et plein d'étoiles.

Winter Skies

I went up on the roof that night
with the intention of drowning myself
in the cold winter sky.

But you joined me there,
and I lost all of these thoughts
in your eyes, so warm
and full of starlight.

La vérité de la beauté

Erica Travers

Au début de la Fontaine
à la Place St-Michel
tu m'as demandé si je t'écrirais un Poème-
une souvenir de garder attentivement-

en l'honneur de nos nouveaux
sentiments
SOPHISTIQUÈS et Parisiennes.

J'ai pris une photo à son place
et t'ai dit que j'étais pas prête à le faire.
Je n'avais pas le cœur de te dire que
Le Poésie Est Menteur.

The Truth About Beauty

(English Translation)

Standing in front of the Fountain
in the Place St-Michel
you asked me if I would write a you a Poem-
a memory to hold onto-

in honor of our new
SOPHISTICATED
Parisian love.

I took a picture instead
and told you that I wasn't ready.
I didn't have the heart to tell you that
Poetry Is A Lie.

Short Fiction

Newsom Fiction Awards:

The Newsom Award in Fiction is given for the best student work in the genre and is named after Roy Newsom, a former Whittier president. Current students from all departments may submit one short story to be considered; English department faculty members judge submissions blind. Traditionally, there are first, second, and third place winners, with the possibility of having honorable mentions as well. Unlike years past, this year two fiction submissions tied for first place and there were no second or third place winners.

A Story to be Submitted for the Newsom Award

Lee Beltrand Chan
Newsom Short Story First Place Tie

The boy is sitting at his computer, beginning to write a story. It starts with an idea, glowing faintly like the pixels of the screen illuminating his face. Sitting alone, the room dark, he writes with purpose; he needs to win the Newsom Award, to have his words and name put down in print, to be validated and to validate. He has no idea what he is going to write.

The story is what he chooses it to be—no, that is only a wish, a whim of the mind, if he was the one to choose he would not be sitting here, alone, writing this story. But he is. He writes about all the possibilities, all the choices that have passed, all the choices to come. Yes—he does know, at least with some vagueness, what will be written.

This story is about a girl. She exists only in the realm of plurality; she has no singular existence, even though singularity is what is being strived for, what is being stricken over, what the strut of authorship is all about for the boy. For him, she is the only and the penultimate, the fiction and reality, possibilities and pessimism.

When he stops to think the cursor blinks in place, expectantly. When he writes the words flow with purpose. He writes…

> Maybe he met her in the freshman dorms, where everything was always close. Living together seems so new, yet so natural, cuddling in beds too small. Roommates know to knock before entering. Everything muffled and too loud, music and voices penetrating through walls. Yet the presence of that noise making it all seem farther away, as together they make a home, or replace one, wrapped in each other's arms.

Yes, to be able to write this story, he has to draw from memory, remember way back, back when the promise of the future was still fresh, clear.

> Maybe he met her on the upper quad, lying together on their backs, looking up at the midnight sky. An usually clear night. They could almost see the rings of Saturn. They talk of the permanence of stars, their lives and hands interwoven. Maybe it was only later that he learned about the unrelenting light of exploded stars, how the beams continue to shine across the universe even after the star is already dead and gone. A supernova. A black hole.

Although his imagination fluctuates between the twin poles of passion, the boy likes this part, being able to sit at the computer, to reminisce, make up the story as he goes. …

> Maybe they went to school together but didn't meet until they got away, away from Whittier, away from the baffling light of the southern California sun shining through the smog. Someone's parent's condo over spring break; expectations and surprises. Maybe she wouldn't have noticed him among the multitudes, but, away from it all, she sees him in a new, more brilliant light. A kiss on the nose.

But it's not just a story, because if it were the boy could write a happy ending. There is no definite end here, nothing set in stone. The backspace key is so close by, so he can write: 'They lived happily ever after.' because he knows that at this point what has been written can still be undone, the ink of the pen replaced by the blinking cursor on the screen.

~~Maybe he made her up. She might never have been a real person. A shadow of the mind, always casting itself on the body below. The multitudes of manifestations don't matter, just the ghost behind them, always close, following or leading the way. She is always with him. Maybe they are living happily ever after.~~

Some passages are struck through, like cupid's arrow through the heart, yet others are erased and rewritten so the reader doesn't even get the chance to see the abstractions, the fantasies, the possibilities. However, the possibilities are still there, but not the one sided sort that writers deal in, pensive and omnipotent.

Maybe her name is [redacted]

When he feels that he has written everything he can, added emphasis to the emotive and edited down what was deemed irrelevant, he stops, goes back to the beginning and writes in a title, the first thing he can think of, off the top of his head. He moves the mouse over the icon that looks like a floppy disk, even though he has never used one. He clicks the mouse. Then the printer icon. Another click. The whir of the printer and the drying of ink seal the story in permanence. There is no turning back now, the range of possibilities has diminished significantly, the story has been written. The boy sits back, lets out a long breath.

Maybe they wanted a part in each other's lives, but she was a senior and he was a freshman. Or maybe he was the senior and she was the freshman. Maybe then that gap was too much, but it wouldn't have mattered if they could only have had the time to grow old together

The next day, April 6th, the boy takes the printout to the English department, drops it off in Marilyn's office. He fills out a three by five card with his information and hands it to her with a copy of his story, no longer pixilated, set fast in ink. She takes it with a smile. She has done this many times today, many more times earlier in the week. So many people have handed her their stories, he is just another face, one among the multitude.

Maybe he met her somewhere on the upper quad, between classes among the multitudes of shuffling feet and sun beaten grass. He freezes when he sees her, a love at first sight kind of thing, the Frisbee he was supposed to catch skidding amongst students behind him.

The boy needs his story to be chosen. He needs to win first place, so that people will read these pages printed in the Literary Review. He needs to be validated, if only for the brief moments when eyes gaze upon the words he has written. No—those moments wouldn't be enough for him. The boy will ask for more, but not yet. Right now all the boy wants is for his story to be chosen, chosen in place of all the 'maybes' that chose not to choose.

Maybe he thought they could live happily ever after, but she thought differently, choosing not. She ruined everything. All in ruin. That bitch. Everything gone, except for the memory. Still can't get rid of the memory, still can't get rid of those moments. But he can try, try to pretend she doesn't exist, that she's just a character in some make believe story. That he can close the covers of the book and it will all be over.

Now the story sits in a pile among others, others that have been worked on so hard; so much emotion, so much of the authors themselves put into the texts. In this purgatory each story waits for its judgment. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting can be so—but then it is picked up, the pages rustled. Eyes focus, begin to read.

Maybe he met her in class. Day after day imagining what he might say to her, her presence becoming more and more suffocating, until he cannot focus at all, the professor's words and wisdom meaningless. It is unbearable, fifty or eighty minutes watching her take notes, waiting for her to look up and see him watching her, so he can look away bashfully, only to raise his eyes a moment later in hopes that she is now watching him in turn, maybe even flashing a smile.

The judge reads on, gets to the part where it says this story wins first place in the Newsom award. But of course, it has not. To make that claim would be an act of fiction.

Maybe they met at a party on Penn Street or across from campus on Painter, or on a balcony overlooking the athletic fields. Stumbling back to the dorms together, not knowing what they were getting themselves into, not caring.

Unlike you reader, the judge has already read to the end and sees how they have a part to play in the story's completion. You reader, don't know your place yet.

Maybe she was so beautiful he didn't know what to say and now will always regret it, his fists clenching as tight as the knot was in his throat.

The story receives first place, the story is going into print. The boy cannot decide what he might do now. He thinks about taking whole stacks of the Literary Review and putting them where the people we wants to read his story might find them. Maybe he could even underline his story in the table of contents, or dog-ear the page on which it begins. He could even go around and tell people face to face that he wrote the story and won the award but no, that would be prideful and the only vanity he indulges in is that of not appearing vain.

Maybe…

Maybe…

Maybe…

The boy's story has won the prize, he has been validated… but that's not the ending he wanted. He wishes he could choose one of these possibilities, one of these futures, one of these 'maybes'. He wants to decide on a name, to put it in writing, to freeze it, commit it to paper, so it becomes true, forever true, forever written. But that's not it, that's not how it works. The choice is not his, these choices are never one sided. The choice to validate is also hers, whoever she may be. Only she can finish the story in a way that works, that completes it, completes him.

The narrator takes this into consideration as he writes. When he started, he wanted the story to be a story in and of itself, for himself, but now, as he comes to the end, he begins to think, to hope, that maybe something will come into the light. So, instead of leaving his name anonymous, he puts it into the story: Lee Beltrand Chan, hoping that, maybe, just maybe, there is a girl out there, maybe she is reading this story as it is coming to a close, maybe she also hates the vagueness and anonymity, maybe she wants to add her name as well. Maybe her name is_____ and maybe there is another story yet to be written.

Insert Name Here

Everysmell

Martina Miles

Newsom Short Story First Place Tie

I am undersun and everysmell is wagging and I am ungrowled and okay. My women are with me and that means that I am okay and the othersmells are all around and there is run to have and roll with the others and it is all wagging. The bigblue is there and smells salt and I when I chase it it runs away but then chases me back to the gritsand. I am flop on it with tongueout and panting and I slit my eyes to the warmsun and feel the windblowing and it is good.

...

My stands slip out from under me and I am on the ground and I don't know why. I try to up but my stands don't hold me and everything is sideways and I whimper to my women and they make worry sounds and I try to up more but my looks are blurry and one look is closing and my tongue is falling out on one side and I feel tired all of a sudden and I close my looks and bellyup till the whimper stops and my little woman picks me up and I don't open my looks but I feel the wet coming out of my mouth and my little woman is taking me somewhere in the fast and everysmell is different and I am farther, farther, farther away till I am dark.

...

My women are with me and that means I am okay. It is cool and I am outofsun, encaved and ungrowled. There is wet in a bowl that I can touch with my tongue and I like that. My women are sounding and it is soft and slow and not full of sharp sticks so that all means that I am okay.

But under my side is a hot that I want to bite out and tear up and so maybe I am not okay. I've smelled the prickle smells before and they make me feel cowercorner and bellyup. I want green to eat but I am so falldown that my look goes dark and my hear goes muddy and my smell is farawaying and I just can't keep open.

I hear a word I know in my woman's sound and I am coming bright and loud and fragrant till I know this cave again. She is saying me and so I open my looks and there is the face of my always woman and her hands are on my head and I feel her softing me so I wag her that I like it. Both of my women are widemouthed when I wag them and make waging sounds back at me and I close my looks again because it all means that I am okay and they are here with me and the hot is starting to flow and I am feeling better.

My always woman says me again and I open my looks and there are my girls, my littermates, and they are making soft sounds, too, and I wag them that I see them and they are widemouthed, too. My girl comes real close and her smell is like puppyhood and she is making sounds at me and I wag her once more even though I am falldown and want to close my looks. Her face is close to mine and she is shushing low sounds into my hears and I don't know any of the sounds but I like to hear them and she has wet on her face and I don't know how so I taste it off and all my women laugh with strangle sounds and there are no more widemouths and

I think I am not okay.
My little girl comes close and she is cold hands on my side and that is good because the hot is fire and I want green and am getting so falldown that my looks close and everything is going faraway and all I can feel is my little girl's cold hands over my hot and so I think that I am encaved.
…
A stick sound crashes and I jolt and the hot is coals and a sharp sound and a prickle smell are here and I am growled and make rumbles. My women make soft sounds and their hands all stroke me so I have to trust them but I am not encaved and I think that I am not okay. A man with prickle smells and bighands is making growl sounds but my women make widemouth at him so I do not move when his bighands touch me and they softsound so I try to ungrowl. And even though the man has prickle smells and growl sounds his bighands are soft but he pokes at the hot and I make moaning and want green and cowercorner and bellyup. And then he is leaving and my women make softsounds and I am so falldown that everysmell is faraway and I am dark.
…
My smells come back and I still don't like this cave but the hot is smaller and my hears say that my women are still here. I open my looks and there is wet in the bowl and I touch it with my tongue and it feels cool in my belly and I touch more till my tongue is wet and I am cooled. My women are looking at me and making sounds and I hear me and "walk" and I know I am going undersun and I wag at them yes and they make widemouth and I am wagged and ungrowled and ready. My stands are stiff but I make it up and then we are moving and leaving the cave and I am wagging and the sun is warming and the smells are windy and I am falldown but so wagged. And we get in the fast and they let the windblock down and the smells jump in and fill everything and I close my looks and sniff and sniff and am wagged.
My women take me into our cave and there is my spot and my wet and my cat and I am encaved and feel wagged but my stands are falldown and I am falldown and so I liedown in my spot and hear while the women make sounds and smells. The sun comes in the cave on my back and the hot in my side is there and I want green but the sun is ungrowling and my little girl brings me eat and it fills me and I tell her wag and she makes softsounds and widemouth and her cool hands touch me. My looks close and my hears are muddy but my smells are open and I drift and the sun moves over and my cave is getting dark and my women put softhands on me and I feel wag.
…
The hot is moving in my belly and looks won't open but my smells say my women are still with me and so that must mean that I am okay. I feel four softhands on me and I know my women are still with me and trying to make the hot bite out. There are buzzes in my hears but my women move their face close and I smell their smells and I feel wag but am too falldown to tell them. They make sounds in my hears and I hear me and listen close and I hear "gooddog" and I know that word and it makes me feel wag and I try to tell them but there is wet

on my face and I am so falldown. My hears are all muddy and buzzed and my looks are closed but I don't feel bellyup and I think that means that I am okay. Everysmell is getting farther but my women are here and I want them to know that I am okay and hear their wagging sounds and see them make widemouth so I open my look as much as I can and I stick out my tongue to taste their wet and they make wagging sounds so I let my looks close again and everysmell is going faraway and I am still open and they are still here and everysmell is gone but their softhands are there and I am okay and okay and I am dark.

New Sensation

Matt Carney

At prime time on July 1st, Fox Report was the first to break the greatest story of all their lives—Los Angeles and the world were both more than likely doomed. The story, "verified by scientists," confirmed what everybody had suspected all along in a magnificent feat of cable news journalism, with frightening quick cuts between colorful and depressing graphs and statistics posted over blurred footage of cities in flames and crisped skeletons. The good Shepard explained in a firm, melodic voice that, according to scientists, Los Angeles and the world were "more than likely doomed; they've suggested that 2063 Bacchus or 433 Eros have a near probable chance of crossing Earth's orbit and a subsequently apt opportunity to strike the Earth, destroying Los Angeles *and the world*." And in the 10 remaining seconds following the quick cuts and footage of utter destruction with statistics, the good Shepard prompted a real scientist, who appeared in the left half of the screen.

"In your professional opinion," he asked the scientist, "is it possible that either of these asteroids have the potential of striking this planet and destroying Los Angeles completely?"

The scientist squinted his eyes, twisted his lips a bit, shaking his head hesitantly. "Well, um, I suppose the short answer is 'yes'—"

And the good Shepard thanked him, concluding the reasonable, balanced and unafraid report on the utter destruction of the world as the image faded to the painfully erotic Disaronno commercial where the buxom brunette asks for "Disaronno on the rocks" and sucks off the last ice cube.

Hundreds of people called the station. Is this the truth, they asked. Is this real? But what's *really* going to happen? And the phone screeners resoundingly reiterated and confirmed what the scientist had said: "'yes.'"

The internet exploded with blog posts and forum debates on the startling "yes" from the real scientist. Those who hadn't seen the report learned of it from others' posts, confirming that it was true—if more than one source confirmed the same information, how could they be wrong?

Allycat_88 said that it served us right for not paying attention, that our complacency and indulgence resulted in our not being prepared and not having a plan.

And xxStensonitexx retorted that it was impossible to have a plan for something like that *really*, to plan for anything *really* and have it turn out, to know any *certainties*.

But Sil3ncingM4chine trumped them all with diagrams and illustrations from NASA's website, ones which clearly pictured the Earth and its orbit and the orbits of thousands of asteroids in neon colors, the wildly elliptical lines tangling together around the tiny illustration of Earth, each one with a name, and all he wrote in accompaniment was "pwned."

John316000 shouted them down in ALLCAPS, reminding them that all the confusing and obviously contradictory science mumbo jumbo all over the internets was only just now trying to describe something the theologians and believers had known for centuries—that Christ would return to the world and rend the flesh all the heathens and doubters and millionaires and their spineless cohorts who'd no doubt be

turned to pillars of salt as they looked back at their pitiful, immoral cities of belligerent sodomy and pornography vaporizing in the million degree blast of Christ's return.

The awareness on the buzz surrounding this report drew the attention of Fox's competitors. "People deserve better than third-rate internet journalism!" shouted MSNBC's prime-time executive producer in the meeting room, straightening his suit jacket and tie. The table full of senior producers and assistant producers and segment producers, all straightening their suit jackets and ties, were more than willing to agree. They nodded vigorously, shouting "yeah" and "no kidding" and guzzling lattes, checking for new comments on posts they wrote on their black berries beneath the table. "The internet lets any Smith, Johnson and Williams say whatever they think and speak their opinion without checks or restrictions or *any credibility at all*—they're gonna put cable news out unless we shape up and get this story out!" And there was a resounding "yeah!" throughout the meeting room as they stood and pumped fists triumphantly.

The story ran on MSNBC primetime; it was the number one story on Countdown. The story on NEOs and confirmed NEAs ran on CNN, CNBC, and much later on CBS, ABC, and NBC. Los Angeles, without a doubt, was doomed according to the confirmation by a real scientist. And they all played the short, but none-the-less completely civilization-changing clip of his resounding "yes," showing ample graphs and statistics and illustrations from NASA's website, ones which clearly pictured the Earth and its orbit and the orbits of thousands of asteroids in neon colors, the wildly elliptical lines tangling together around the tiny illustration of Earth.

Every other station on television and radio recirculated the story, just hoping somebody would listen, hoping to get the word out as quickly as possible, to as many people as possible. And—merely as a bonus—they also figured they would provide this information competitively faster, more completely and with far more intensity than their rivals in less time, if only for the viewers sake as to knowing much sooner that they should surrender any hope the story was false and figure out how to spend their final twenty-four hours.

The hearts of millions skipped millions of beats as each of them came across the story of *the end*. The news men cried so much their faces were wet—viewers knew they were not lying. Resolutions were made and shattered, wagons were jumped from and jumped on, secret desires revealed, not-so-secret desires enacted, rampant indulgences ended, favorite vices retired and reemployed and discovered from sudden trials. Discounts were flaunted, honored, surrendered, stolen, wrenched from the cold, stiff fingers of the hardworking. Love was given up on and realized and reunited, and it was too late and never too late for all of them.

Jacob had never been in love—that is, he'd never shared it with somebody else, always hiding it away fearfully in his bedroom beneath his pillow, scrawled in the dark in a shaky, stubby hand he believed to be disgusting. But, hearing the radio, he shot up in bed, the sheets falling from his baby soft skin, sticky and naked in the heat. He threw the pillow from his bed and threw his journal and his sheets and jumped up hollering and hurled the mattress away from the frame. Forgetting his pants and shirt, he tore from the room into the hallway, past his gasping and mother at the dishes and father in the living room. He wretched the front door open, hurtling

out and up the street in his boxer shorts toward Emily's house, the patio where he imagined her every day of his life for the last five years, in her blue dress, pony tail and soft lips.

Isabella pulled her car in the driveway and shut it off, the stuttering media man's voice fading with the shutter of the engine. She loosened her tie, unbuttoning the tight buttons of her blouse, and she sighed, thinking of the end. A fiery eruption? Screaming riots, maddening orgies? What would they do? What would she do? She bellowed ironically in the isolation of the darkened driveway. She was rich. She was an anchor! She was a talking head and shoulders everybody knew! "But all I did was read," she confessed to the darkness, "I read invisible men's words and they made me rich." Maybe she read her husband's script, too. She'd never had an orgasm, ever, always focused hard on reading the scripts from boogiemen. But she realized, laughing again, her hand caressing her chest, her shirt unbuttoned and her hair down in the dark, that she felt sexy on her own now that she needn't try any longer.

Officer Michael Brown had always grabbed his son by the collar when he found out he'd been getting high or drinking late at night with pond scum down the street like Josh Cooper or that no-good swim star William Powers. He'd take the joint from his outstretched, shaking hand, slapping him across the back of his stringy head. Once, it was a little baggie, the powdery rocks white inside. That was the time he broke his son's nose and wiped the blood from his fist on his pants. Officer Brown sat in his half unbuttoned uniform at the edge of his bed, the radioman rambling hysterically, sobbing. He was a lawman. He'd avoided all the things he punished people so relentlessly for. Slowly, he reached for the box beneath his bed. He'd never turned the marijuana or cocaine into the station. He smelt the joint cautiously; the scent was deep and sweet. He hung it in his mouth, curious.

Josh loved speed. He loved the challenge of searching for it, calling endless phone numbers to find it, loving a thousand "best friends," their faces fading with it. He loved blowing glass in tin-foiled rooms, the little crystals cast with rainbow, the dragon white smoke pouring from their long, whispered exhales, the sudden orgasm of static electric in his skin and mind and the end of time. He loved suffering; it meant a time for more. But the news—he dreaded this news of the end really. Was it *really*? What was *really*, *really*, he asked himself in the thin, pallid sweat of his 140th hour and the world's 11th. He told them it was a dream, he'd had it 6 months ago and it was coming now. Chris Kandmin, knowingly, advised him to sleep on it. Josh murmured deliriously he didn't need sleep, he'd never tweak again, as he crashed into a black slumber.

Ethan always wanted to sleep with someone. And, honestly, he didn't care if it was a boy. He just wanted to know *somebody*, to feel their heat and their heart and to come with them. Nobody from his high school wanted to with him—he wasn't unattractive. But nobody wanted him. He stepped out of his car and left it running in the intersection. As he walked, people of all ages fled through the dark street around him, some of them squealing with delight and others with agony. Two topless girls in plaid skirts skipped toward him, their breasts bouncing in time. They hollered at him, picking at the buttons on his shirt, laughing, and he could smell the rum and chocolate. But now, in the street, with everybody cheap and afraid, it meant nothing and he no longer cared.

Olivia always respected those who killed mercilessly. She silenced the

rambling radioman, shoving *Xtort* in the disc player and skipping ahead to *Son of a Gun* for a proper soundtrack. She spit out the window and ripped her shirt open, pushing her bleached hair back and stepping on the gas and not letting up. Her monstrous Ram surged forward, barreling down the dark street through a red light, and another—she missed a passing motorcyclist by inches, the suction throwing the bike out of control. She laughed hysterically and eyed the boy running through the street in his boxers, jerking the wheel to run him down. But the tires screeched on the pavement—she slid past him, careening into the patio of the house on the end of the street, a girl in a blue dress colliding with the windshield.

Emma was tired of canon. She was tired of verses, hymns, penance, creeds and first councils. She was tired of bodies and blood. She was tired of incessantly hearing about belligerent sodomy. Sobbing in her room, the light blazing and the radioman blaring and running on with his media circus sermon, the anarchy and fucking in the streets, Emma was sick to her stomach from all the adherents and the adherence in her life. But suddenly, Ava burst through the door and tugged violently at her school girl skirt and shirt, ripping the shirt open, screaming to Emma, "You're free! You're free!" And Emma jumped up, following Ava, ripping her shirt from her soft breasts.

Chris Kandmin and Dr. Rob Vesrado peaked out from Rob's home, having heard a car plow through the house at the end of the street some time ago. They'd hesitated, for the sun was soon to rise again. Hairy-faced Rob took a drag, snorted, and spit in obsessive, ceaseless reordering, and Chris shot paranoid glances in every direction.

"Help them, Rob—you said you were a doctor—"

"Not with all of them watching."

"Nobody's watching!"

"Somebody could be watching—"

"We've imagined it—you said you were a—"

"Not with everyone watching—"

"You've been awake… sleep on it—"

"Not with—what?"

"Sleep—"

"Alright, ok, ok."

Danny always worked hard at remaining a conscientious driver. Though he often rode his bike fast, he didn't cut or split lanes obnoxiously. But returning from Crescent City this day, nobody was conscientious. Leaving the redwood highways, the road became progressively hurried, frenzied, and finally anarchic, with topless daughters and bellowing fathers hurling beer bottles at him in Whittier. So he cut everyone off, splitting the lanes at will and weaving. What was happening? As he rushed toward the intersection near home, he saw a boy, fat and glistening, jogging through the street in his boxers, gazing to him hopefully.

Tony had been high daily since his freshman year. He struggled to keep his life secret from his parents. But now, knowing he could never take back the years lost to indulgence, he vowed to end it and tell them everything. He didn't want to die alone. Tony pushed his stringy blond hair and tears from his face and headed to his father's room, opening the door, crying "dad—" his father sat at the edge of his bed in his uniform, a joint hanging and smoking from his lips.

Chris struggled to take his gaze from the rising sun while Rob and Josh "slept on it." He heard the screams in the distance, gun shots. The sky echoed. Was it real? Or just the accumulated days of meth and waking dreams? He imagined seeing two sobbing, topless catholic girls with that kid Ethan Stine walking down the sidewalk. They stopped before a BMW, where he heard a woman orgasm.

In her short years, Emily always felt she was an object. And now, sprawled and shattered on the sidewalk, the howling lunatics in her smoldering house pinned beneath the battered ram, it's dying driver laughing, some familiar, chubby face confessing to her again and again and again, her life pulsing and fading and fading and fading, she felt no different.

"Get out here, Tony! Don't you dare hide from me!" Officer Brown shouted, pounding on Tony's door, emotional from the joint, relentless from the lines, and frenzied from the loneliness and acute knowing of looming death. And Tony screamed as the sun broke through his window and the door crashed.

William Powers, exhausted from so much physical and emotional effort the week prior at practice, shifted beneath his sheets upon hearing some commotion, his heavy eyes scarcely lifting. He couldn't understand it, so he did nothing, returning to Sunday sleep.

Isabella let the three teens into her car, the girls topless and cold, the boy weeping and afraid, and nestled them close to her warm, bare skin and flowing hair.

The real scientist panicked, boarding the ship to Rome with subsequent bus ticket to Lavinio.

Emily passed away alone, the boy thinking she'd already died.

The four of them slept.

The sun rose.

Nobody who'd heard the story expected it when the world didn't end the following morning. There wasn't a million degree blast or a terrific flood. No giant waves, no crazy flaming hail, not even regular hail or flaming anything. Actually, live footage from Fox News did show a meteor falling to Earth in a fireball over the Hollywood hills. But this was summarily ignored by the public—though it was flaming and heading to Earth from space, it was much too small to destroy Los Angeles or the world. It landed harmlessly in somebody's Escalade, destroying it completely.

The parts of the Los Angeles team assembled, sipped, wheezed and debated at the headquarters in Universal City.

"But that definitely is *not* news, people," the morning senior segment producer shouted at his morning assistant segment producers and the regular morning segment producers and the other regular producers. "There are flaming, completely destroyed vehicles *everywhere* right now. So how is that anything any Jake, Josh or Jennifer doesn't know already?"

"Well, I didn't know that!" Jennifer Brown, the morning segment executive producer, shouted as the phone began to ring at her adjacent desk. She picked up the receiver, but did not speak into it before adding, "We've been in here for twenty-four fucking hours, Andrew. I don't know what the hell's going on out there!"

Though they'd broken the greatest story of all their lives, they'd stopped reporting it after midnight: the red eye show had follow-ups on the gay bishop story

and the story that Jacko's nanny can't merry him because she's already married. Hannity & Colmes, the report and Geraldo were all reruns, and the editorial report was focused on Dan Rather.

"We've had some call-ins about some reckless driving, a few hit and runs, lewd conduct," an assistant's voice came in flatly from across the floor. "Some gun violence. You know."

Andrew shook his head, placing his hands firmly on his hips. He shouted around the room. "You're not giving me anything, people! That's everyday stuff. That's what's happening everywhere. That *isn't* news."

"We've got a report," the voice continued, "about a truck that drove through a house and killed a teenager and her parents."

Andrew wagged a finger toward the assistant's voice—he could not see him in his cubical across the news room. "Now we're on to something. Alright, I want details. What's it all about?"

The voice raised as it related the police report. "This driver, apparently, was a crazed woman named Olivia Miller. She plowed into the first story of a house on Bushnell Avenue in Pasadena where a teenage girl was sitting on the stairs, and the truck—"

"What was she driving?" Andrew cut in.

Some papers shuffled in the background. "It was… right, a '97 Dodge Ram 3500. And as far as we know, this was completely unprovoked."

"So she was just pissed?"

"She was just pissed." The voice concluded. "Although," he added a moment later, "the report said something about some blaring music. The disc was from a band called KMFDM. I did some research and apparently some of the members are German and, interestingly enough, the band was a favorite of those Columbine kids—"

Andrew shot up. "Columbine! You mean that Marilyn Manson shit!"

The voice shuffled his papers, but confessed, "well, I've never listened to either."

The wheels in Andrews head were turning loud and fast enough to tune out the disembodied assistant and Jennifer Brown, who was trying to get his attention having finished her phone call. "It's coming together for me, people. This… this, crazed maniac woman—"

"She was found topless," the voice cut in quickly.

"Andrew," Jennifer said quietly.

"Yeah—this topless—this naked, deranged woman blaring and—"

"Inspired by," added another assistant beside Jennifer's desk.

"Yes, blaring Marilyn Manson whom she was strongly—who inspired her, through her devotion to him, to kill—"

"He slaughtered her!" somebody shouted.

"Andrew!"

"To *summarily eviscerate* an innocent little girl with the king-sized wheels of her Dodge Ram!" Andrew bellowed with finality, thrusting his finger triumphantly.

The morning assistant segment producers and the regular morning segment producers and the other regular producers all fell into amused *ooohs* and *ahhhs* and *uuugs* and other smiling unpleasantries.

"Andrew," Jennifer began, enunciating over the group, "one of Bob Wright's guys is demanding an explanation. Accuracy in Media is reporting that we've sensationalized the asteroid story."

A chilling silence sliced through them all. A few of the assistants and producers shied away from the open space, taking their lattes back to their desks. Others were too uncomfortable to leave the circle, instead shaking their heads or looking down or away or at awkward feet.

Andrew's eyes and brow narrowed. He preferred a cigarette in that moment, something strong, a Camel Turkish Gold, but instead relegated himself to a stick of cinnamon chewing gum. "Jennifer," he began, crossing his arms and staring at her down his nose, "we haven't sensationalized the asteroid story."

"That's what they're saying, Andrew, and we—"

"And we," he interrupted, "are not obligated to address something that isn't our doing or our problem. Are we?"

Jennifer stared at him, the rhythmic contractions of his jaw, his eyes dry and flat.

He stood up, throwing his arms out. "They broke the story in New York. *New York*!" And he gestured wildly to New York, *out there*, away from their morning assistant segment producers and the regular morning segment producers and all of them. "How are we liable for what New York broke way out here in Los Angeles? We had no part in that segment whatsoever. We did no journalistic or critical research or put anything into that story whatsoever."

"But Andrew," Jennifer reasoned, her palms opening, "are we not a part of this company? And beside the company, don't we have an ethical responsibility to the public as the news media in the big picture?" She looked about the group of producers. "Even if we didn't break the story, you and me and us on the West Coast, if it's true that this chaos stemmed from sensationalizing the asteroid story, don't we have a responsibility to correct, or at least to inform the public, about… just to tell them…" She fell off her plea. The eyes of the others only looked to her in small, darting glances, preferring the discomfort of the tense office to Jennifer's noble appeal for justice.

"Junk science." Andrew shook his head, also looking away from her. "Some junk science story doesn't make people crash cars and rape and pillage. You say we should be responsible for some bullshit that *everybody* ran? *Everybody ran the story!* Who's responsible then, huh Jennifer? Is it you? Are you the media's caretaker and everybody else's?"

Jennifer thought carefully about how to respond, but the telephone rang once again, and though she hung on to the thought as tightly as she could, the flurry of electric information on the line stole her away.

The room reverberated her voice around it's icy silence until slowly, one by one, the morning producers began trudging back to life, the trappings of the morning media machine warming, milling, finally running with direction and in it's typical, expected whir, each piece moving where it should, when it should, following the restraints of it's casting.

The disembodied voice from across the studio suggested a sports riot; Beckham retired as captain of England's football team and plus, Brazil was out of the Cup. But Andrew reminded the voice that no American cared a rat's ass about

"football," and real football was a season away.

Nevertheless, the stories on Beckham, for what they were worth, ran anyway, images of the angry English footballers drunk and hollering in the streets and pubs.

And the Brazilians, too, with their long, slurred names and Portuguese curses grumbled through Rio, everyone ripping down the Brazilian flags and colored ribbons until the cities were dim and sober again. They reported that bar owners in Brazil were facing a two million reais loss in the wake of Brazil's defeat. The worst in a generation.

No doubt there were riots in American cities, too. They reasoned; the world is on edge, frustrated and angry and bickering with itself like some hundred-and-ninety-three headed demon slapping and scratching at itself. Crazed drivers, like young and angsty teenagers, inspired by the likes of Marilyn Manson to commit murder on the innocent. Grown women molesting groups of teenagers. Police officers turning on their sons. It was a full moon, they joked, the public agreeing and guessing that yeah, that was probably the tides. Global warming! Gore's certainly got everybody dancing and antsy on that one. And that John Kerry fellow and George, all their bickering—maybe that and the sports and the full moon too. At any rate, there were other things to report: the Mexican government had outlawed unseemly baby names, like Lluvia, Azul, and Kevin.

That evening at 9:25, XP14 tumbled past the Earth at a distance equal to the moon, silent, inert and unknowing, without fanfare, observed only to those who'd awaited and expected its passage.

A Home for Gretel
Brandon Halcomb

The strange white woman kissed the black little girl with dry lips; the two were then immersed in an omnipresent, foreign blindness. And almost instantaneously, it was gone. What did it mean? Was it a sign that this was the right place? Prosperity? Liberty? Freedom? Sounds jumped from the mouths surrounding them on all sides, a din subdued only by the girl's wariness to this new environment. The child barely caught the words thrown in her direction, syllables from this new country that she didn't quite comprehend: chaos like water, which here they tamed with plastic bottles and toilets.

"… you… adoption?"

"Where … from? … real mother …"

"… love like … own?"

"How do... plan…?"

"What does Hansel… sister?"

The only thing the little girl grasped onto was a plush bear forced into her hands for the flight. Her mind, unlike her body, tried clinging to a plethora of pleasant memories; her mind kept her coming back to one in particular: Her mother had kissed her forehead before she left, before she was placed into the car and driven away. She had wrapped her hand around the handle and pulled to escape, but she could not. The door was locked. The social worker in the backseat would not allow her to do so regardless, and so she surrendered. She turned to face her mother, who was turned away, sobbing into empty hands. Consciousness kept the memory on repeat, reaching desperately for it like a stubborn child; it slipped away gently like a passing wave – soon it would be gone entirely, only the resonance of the event echoing in her ear, and by then it would be in a tongue she couldn't understand anymore.

More light surrounded them and she felt the lips on her head again. What had her name been? What had her mother called her in her lullabies at the bedside? She couldn't remember. She heard the hardened plastic of the strange white woman's face mold into a celluloid-perfect smile, watched without reaction as the gaunt silhouette knelt and gathered her into her arms, wrapping an arm around her back and setting her atop the knife of her hip. The girl cringed in pain.

"Ms. Weiss, what is the girl's name?" came from the crowd. The white woman stopped and there was a silence; they waited for her words to come, and the woman knew that once the words slipped from her lips, these people would gather ever closer like a swarm of white birds flocking to breadcrumbs from the hands of a beggar. She twisted her neck elegantly in either direction, seeing that her men were ready – large men capable, it would seem, of moving mountains. She then faced forward, blinked, and released the answer.

"Her name is Gretel."

The lights came more often now as the people moved, misplaced ants seeking direction where the source had run dry. The white woman moved ever more swiftly. Her bodyguards moved around her, keeping people from reaching past the acceptable line of demarcation. The black girl clung to the woman's shoulder and closed her eyes; the tabloids called this affection: the girl called it fear. She tried again to recall her name. Gretel was too foreign, but it was all she could remember. The cacophony was gone, replaced by the sound of rapid movement and awkward silence.

Gretel looked about her. The seats were made of black leather; the white woman was across from her, watching her. Behind the shell of a body she exposed to the public's eye was a calculating woman, a capricious socialite just looking for the next stone to grasp on the long, craggy climb of life in order further to perpetuate her name in neon lights. Gretel did not see this: she saw only the blonde hair, the ivory skin, the piercing steel-gray eyes, and, as a whole, the woman responsible for her being in this foreign land to begin with. Gretel's eyes met the woman's with hatred, a hatred seeded only in fear. Why was she here? The waves crashed against her body and took her with them, expelling her into even deeper waters yet. "I am your mother – your mother," the woman said in a tone reminiscent of the unhinging of a witch's jaw. "Do not forget it."

The car turned left as if in a circle, a fish running antithetically back into the stream – starting anew from the beginning with no recollection of the past, and came to a stop. The door opened and Ms. Weiss stepped out, her stilettos clicking on the ground as she walked. A woman with a thick Mexican accent peeked her head into the car. She waved her arm to the child, beckoning her. Gretel moved, her body taking her without resistance. She stood alone on the edge of time, trying desperately to anticipate the path on which she now walked and to discover exactly where it was taking her. Every footfall on this manmade concrete resounded emptily. Where had she come from? Was it truly different than this place? Where was the line that separated the two? The door before her lay prone, waiting for her entry. As she entered the home, the door was closed behind her. There was no din here, but the chaos was all around her. It was strange – she felt as if she were swimming in a whirlpool, the aqueous air jetting in all directions, but nothing was moving: actions were taking place invisibly, a film reel ghost of the past and future laid over the present like a snug blanket firmly in place for the winter ahead.

"Come," the Mexican maid said. She ushered Gretel into a room filled with superficial playthings, much like the plush bear she realized she still clung to. The walls were red like blood; the carpets were white like snow. Gretel kept her eyes on the door. The maid smiled warmly and left the room, closing the door behind her. Gretel could not reach the handle this time, but she had little hope for its ability to release her anyway: it would seem that in this society, closed doors seldom opened, even in the understanding of actuality and necessity of escape. "You can't escape. I've tried." Gretel turned away from the door and found the source of the voice, which she had missed when she looked over the room moments before. It was a little boy, black like she. He was shorter, though, and,

while healthy, he was obviously smaller, probably because he was younger, but she could not be certain of his age. Who was this boy? What purpose did he serve? Why was he here too? Did she know him?

"Who are you?" she asked him.
"Hansel," he said. "And you are Gretel, right?"
"Yes."
"That makes you my sister."
"Does it?"
"That's what they say."
"Why are we here?"
"I don't know."
"How do you pass the time?"
"I don't remember."

The two sat down together. They played with their bears, trying to give them different personalities, but in the end, they found themselves tending a garden of boredom in full-bloom. Perhaps they had expected a cotillion lifestyle. Instead, they watched the shadows dance on the walls and questioned the extent to which they were real, resolving that if they considered the shadows to be as real as the plush toys they mimicked, they would have twice as many friends, which made the days appear to flow so much more smoothly. It was as though the children were holding their breaths and submerging themselves in the lifestyle in order to avoid the overhead reality that life was, in fact, choppy water that could suffocate them should they choose to breathe above the surface.

Night fell early one night; the children had grown weaker over the days. Their meals had been sparse and populated with few nutrients. The maid attempted to sneak them snacks whenever she could, but it did little to sustain the children. On this particular night, Hansel and Gretel heard voices from outside their room. They pressed their ears to the door as fish to the glass. Outside they heard Ms. Weiss walking, the plastic of her body contorting to keep her bipedal, her joints hinged and creaked, knifing the air. Gretel remembered the car ride she had shared with the woman. She remembered: mother. Ms. Weiss was her mother. What is a mother? She affixed the term with love, with caring, with benevolence, yet she had seen the woman only through a window in the time since coming to this new land. Occasionally she heard a rendition of her voice with music on a stereo outside the door; remembering it helped her grow fonder of the woman. Did she love her? It was her mother. She had to love her. Any hatred had long since passed; Gretel had given herself to the ocean and let the tide take her in any direction – in doing so, she forgot her home and the differences. This was her home: it was her present reality. She listened intently through the door with Hansel.

"I've fallen from popularity?" Weiss screamed. She threw a dish at a wall and turned to face a mirror, adjusting her golden tresses after her moment of rage.

"Yes, Ms. Weiss, your ratings are down; people aren't buying your

music, and your photos aren't selling the way they used to," the rotund man – her publicist – said. He resembled a pig; his suit was one size too small and his salmon-colored skin was stretched like canvas along a frame that was not naturally so large.

"Tell me, Mr. Spiegel, am I still beautiful?" Her eyes did not leave the mirror.

"Yes, but, well…"

"Well…?"

"You're old."

"No, I'm young."

"If you think you're young, you've forgotten that you've lived a rather long life in the spotlight."

"But I adopted children from Africa!"

"And the tabloids loved it for a day. Do you remember when you adopted Hansel? They forgot about you quickly after that. And that's why you adopted Gretel. You're honestly a terrible mother. I mean, to you, those children are merely failed attempts to keep your name afloat in the media's–"

"Enough, Mr. Spiegel." Ms. Weiss diverted her gaze from the mirror and glared at the fat man before her with soul-piercing eyes, eyes like an eagle sharpening its talons, preparing for a feast.

Spiegel visibly began to sweat; the beads began rolling down the roll of fat seated under his chin.

"How, then, do I reclaim my fame?"

"I don't know."

"Think, you imbecile!" Ms. Weiss was furious, but soon her eyes were calculating. She was planning the best course of action. Inside her mind, a film was rolling where she was the tragic princess, weeping. Something had gone wrong, terribly wrong. But what? What had gone wrong? Plastic surgery? No, not her face. Anything but her appearance. The children. The children. She had nearly forgotten about them. "Wait…"

Spiegel feared her all the more now. The tone of her voice was one of distant malevolence, like the sound of a metal plug grinding into an outlet and the wisps of air around the electrical device moving as she brought it ever closer to the tub, wherein he and his entire future were contained. He pulled a notebook from his suit-coat pocket and retrieved a pen from his left trouser pocket. Her plan would be contained on the pages within to ensure he would later remember it.

"I will take the children to the market and give them a jar of one-hundred pennies–"

"Why not give them a dollar bill?"

"Because this way they will think they have more than they actually do. As I was saying, I will give them a jar of one-hundred pennies and I will take them to the market tomorrow. I will dress in disguise so the paparazzi do not see me and do not follow. Then I will tell the children to…"

Spiegel hastily wrote the words that spewed from her mouth. He did not agree with what Ms. Weiss was about to do, but if he did, at least outwardly, then he could keep his job, he could pay his bills, he could provide for the family he had at home, which he loved dearly. As soon as she was done speaking, he closed the book and left the room to gather a jar and the hundred pennies. Weiss looked at herself in the mirror once again: "I will be remembered."

Gretel moved away from the door; Hansel followed. "What is she going to do to us?" the boy asked. "I'm scared, Gretel."

"She wants to leave us and make sure we don't return," Gretel replied. "Don't worry, Hansel."

"How can I not worry?"

"Just sleep. Know that I will take care of you."

Gretel devised a plan. It was a simple plan, one she thought was sure to bring them safely home to their mother's loving arms. This was a test from this foreign land, a rite of initiation of sorts. They would succeed.

The next morning, the maid dressed Hansel and Gretel in the most common of garbs. Ms. Weiss entered their room for the first time since Gretel's arrival. She wore an outfit that looked to Gretel like something from a maid's wardrobe – the wardrobe they pulled from when they left the home at night to revisit their own families. Gretel had looked out the window and studied the frocks. Simple, nothing elegant, nothing like Ms. Weiss's typical attire. And yet, here their mother was, standing before them like a basic human being. She wore on her face no make-up, dark glasses, and a forward-facing sports cap. She looked old, nearly ancient – almost witch-like.

Mr. Spiegel walked in toting the large jar. It was filled to the brim with copper coins, what Gretel gathered must be pennies. Ms. Weiss knelt to the children's level. "Come on, children, we're off to the market together." With that, Weiss walked away. The children were then ushered by the maid to the backseat of Mr. Spiegel's car. "Buckle up," came Weiss's voice from the front seat. Spiegel began to drive. The pennies rattled in the jar that he held onto with his inner thighs. He thought of his own children and of what he would do should he be placed in this situation. But he fought those thoughts off. This was not his concern. His family was safe at home. He knew this. But if this plan did not work, he knew there would be hell to pay from Weiss.

She smiled the entire way to the market. It had been a long while since she had been in a civilian car. All too soon, the car parked and everyone got out, closing their doors behind them. Spiegel handed the jar to Gretel. "Here you go, little girl. You'll be needing this." Hansel held Gretel's free hand. She pulled it away. He looked at her, dejected. Gretel put her hand into the jar to feel of the pennies. As the group walked, she let fall behind them one penny at a time from the jar. Weiss, who never once looked down, said, "Oh my. I think I must have forgotten something in the car. Children, go on ahead and find a steak for our supper tonight. We're eating together. Won't it be splendid? Now, go on ahead while Mr. Spiegel and I go find my something." The market hustled busily around Hansel and Gretel. They looked up and Ms. Weiss and Mr. Spiegel were gone.

"Gretel, they've left us."
"I know."
"I don't remember the way back."
"It's okay. We're okay."
"Can you get us out?"
"Yes."
"How?"
"I've left a trail of pennies. We should be able to find our way out if we follow them."

Gretel turned around, looking for the reflections of the sun on the faces of the small copper coins. She found no such reflections. She found no such coins. Little did she know that the people of the market saw the coins and picked them up almost as soon as she had dropped them. They had pocketed them and used them in purchases. These people had not even seen that they belonged to a little girl.

"What do we do now?"
"I don't know."
"Should we ask for help?"
"We could try."

The children desperately tried to ask for help from the people around them. The sun beat down and their words went unnoticed. Soon, their bellies ached with hunger. They were very weak, indeed, from eating so little over the course of the weeks.

"We need food."
"Maybe a merchant will help us."

But no merchant would. Every single one of them turned the children away: "If you have no money, you do not belong here." The children felt the beating of the sun's rays on their skin. It burned. Hansel stumbled on a stone. He did not get up and was soon walked over. No one saw the mess they had made of him. His blood dried quickly in the oven. Gretel saw this and did not fear for she merely thought it an illusion, a trick her mind had played on her. She did not believe it to be true. She looked around in this chaos. Where had the water taken her? Where was her mother? She desperately turned in circles, trying to find where her memory had lost her.

And then she was alone. The sun engulfed her, an omnipresent, warm sensation that was somehow familiar. And there was her mother, standing before her with arms wide open. Gretel ran. She shed her clothes and ran as fast as she could. The woman embraced her, their skin dark together, creating a resonant echo.

"Where am I?"

"You are home."
"I am hungry."
"You'll never be hungry again."

With that, the woman held her daughter closer. Together they cried as the sun, the color of blood, fell from the sky, heralding the crescent boat to sail on the violet sky in a constant rhythm for this is the way of things. The illusion cast, the mother and the daughter held each other through the night. The black little girl held tight, clinging for the memory to never let her go.

Kisses for the Ducks

Tina Rinaldi

On Sunday afternoons we'd go feed the ducks. Just Grandpa, Grandma and me. I'd carry the bread and wear a sweater. Grandma always made me wear a sweater, "Like Mr. Rogers," she says, "Just like Mr. Rogers on TV." He wears a sweater, so I wear my sweater and then Grandpa and Grandma take me to go feed the duckies.
We walk down the block, turn left at the big angel statue. I run ahead once we meet the grass and let my hair blow behind me. I leap on the nearest stone tile, hop to the next one following and then the one after that. Down the long line of them, I pick a pink carnation from one of the bouquets I pass.
"What are you doing?"scolds Grandma. "Come take my hand, and leave those flowers alone, they're for other people's families."
We'd take the short cut through the chapel, down the marble hallway with the wonderful echo. Grandpa takes a blue and yellow pin wheel from one of the vases nailed to the wall. He holds it down to me and blows so that it turns green. I have a pinwheel, a pink carnation, bread for the ducks and a smile of baby teeth. Grandma shakes her head.
"He wasn't using it," Grandpa says, waving his hand towards the wall.
At the pond I share my three slices of bread, one for each of us. Grandpa throws his far so that the ducks have to chase after it. Grandma smiles, but hands me back her slice, so I can have two. I feed the duckies in little pieces to try to get them closer but they snatch the bread up hungrily and run away. "Goodbye Duckies!" I squeal as they swim to the other side of the pond, "Good-Bye!"
Grandpa hushes me quickly, "No shouting Ann, there are people here who need their quiet." A family is looking in our direction, gathered around a new bouquet they've brought.
"But the duckies…." I point sadly, "I want to say goodbye."
We listen to the sound of them go, chuckling as they swim. Grandma kneels down to whisper in my ear, "When they go, you can blow them kisses." She puts her hand to her mouth and sends them a kiss. Holding my flower and pinwheel I do the same.
"Bye-bye duckies," and we leave them with kisses.

***

On Sunday afternoons we visit Evergreen Lawns. Just the two of us, Grandpa and me. Grandma always said she thought flowers were a waste; she wanted to be brought food after she passed away. So I carry a bowl of beef broth and bouquet of flowers too, just in case she wants both.
It's close to the house, but I drive for Grandpa's sake, since he can't walk much anymore. Down the block, turn left at the big angel statue, we drive up towards the duck pond. I help Grandpa out of the car and we go to where Grandma is buried.

We stay for a long time, listening to the ducks chuckle as they swim, before we leave the flowers and pour out the soup onto the grass. Grandpa is
ready to go home and turns quietly to make his way back to the car, leaving me alone with Grandma.

In my head I can hear her, whispering in my ear, "When they go, you can blow them kisses." She puts her hand to her mouth and sends us a kiss. Hand to my mouth, I do the same.

Regina's Great Escape

Erica Travers

Pete walked by the pet store one day and decided to set all of the dogs free. He passed it every day on his way to work, and he told me later that he couldn't stand seeing them like that, locked up in cages and whimpering. In his mind he must have built it up, turned it into some heroic gesture; just one thing that he could do with his life to change something – anything. Maybe it wasn't quite as impressive as that newspaper article we read about breaking gorillas out of the zoo, but there sure hell weren't any zoos where we grew up, and he had to do something. So he just walked in one day and stole the keys, set them all free.

I saw him the next day outside of school, standing there waiting for me on the back steps, smoking a cigarette he from his dad. He liked to think that he looked so badass with his spiky hair that never quite stood up right and his sarcastic self-indulgent smile. When he told me what happened, I really had to wonder just what he was thinking. Where were all of those dogs supposed to go? Who was going to take care of them? How was it any better that they sit locked in cages at the pound? But Pete sometimes didn't think about those practical details. That's just the kind of kid he was.

When he showed up at my door later that night with a tiny little dachshund in a comically large puppy bed, I can't say I was all that surprised.

"Hey Sasha!"

"What's her name?" I asked him, unable to think of anything else to say.

"I don't know. She doesn't have one."

"Now, was this the reason for the pet store episode, or just a happy unanticipated consequence?"

Pete ignored my question, glancing adoringly down at the puppy and playing with her soft black ears. He learned his face in close to mine, as though in confidentiality. "She's my favorite," he whispered. "I want you to have her." After a short pause he continued in a more conversational tone, "my parents won't let me have a dog."

When he left I told my mom the story and she laughed. Even as a teenager, completely engrossed in the time consuming business of rebelling against parental control and fighting for causes I didn't understand, I took a moment every day to appreciate how lucky I was. My friends' parents, they would have refused to let them keep her; they would have yelled about personal responsibility, or maybe threatened to call the cops. But my mom, she just laughed and shook her head, then she drove me to the mall to buy dog food. She even bought my new puppy a collar. It was blue and read "Regina."

Pete and I took Reggie for walks together, and at least once a week he'd come over with some new toy for her. It made me laugh to see him walking down the street carrying fluffy squeaking pink elephants. If I hadn't known Pete so well, I might have been a little jealous. I never saw him smile for anyone the way he smiled when he saw her run.

We were fifteen then. The world was out to get us and no one understood

understood our problems, but we were happy anyhow, partly out of spite. Pete's parents always hated me.

It started when we were five. We met on the school bus and he asked me if I would be his new best friend. I said yes and we wrote notes to each other and passed them back and forth in class. His parents told him he wasn't allowed to visit me after school because my house was "in a dangerous neighborhood," as if that meant anything at all living on Cape Cod.

We both knew it wasn't about that.

Once when we were twelve he called to ask if he could sleep over my house. Threats were made. Phones were hung up. When his parents showed up at our door in a self-righteous moral panic, my mom tried to reassure them. "What's the problem? There's nothing they can be doing at 2:00 in the morning that they couldn't be doing at 2:00 in the afternoon."

By the time we started high school, they were telling him he wasn't allowed to talk to me at all.

They liked to think that they were in control.

We devised secret answering machine codes. "Yogurt is on sale at Shaw's, two for a dollar" meant meet me at my house after school. "Dinosaurs roamed the earth for millions of years" meant change of plans, call back when the parental unit has vacated the house. The thing about Pete's parents was that they were good at pretending not to know what was going on. Maybe that was why they didn't like me. Me and my mom, we don't bother to pretend. In a way we stood for everything they hated and sometimes I couldn't stop myself: I took that and shoved it right in their stuck-up, close-minded little faces.

"Operation Cheshire Cat" was our way of getting back at his parents for their ridiculous rules. After they left I would come over and we would move every picture in the house two inches to the right. Switch around the DVDs in their living room. Turn all the magnets on the refrigerator upside down. It was our little vengeful indulgence. If it had any effect at all, he never told me. Pete was a little older than me, but his parents wouldn't let him learn to drive. So when I turned 16 and got my license, I'd take Reggie and we'd pick him up a block away from his house to go on adventures. We found an abandoned hospital the next town over, and it became our secret base. It was dangerous and dark and full of mystery; it was everything his parents wanted to protect him from, and it was perfect.

That was where I had all of my firsts. First cigarette, first drink, first kiss – all there, in the midst of broken furniture and graffiti scrawled on crumbling, pus colored walls. I thought then that maybe he loved me, but we decided the next day that we were just friends. Friends who sometimes snuck into abandoned buildings to mess around. But still friends. The decision to go all the way was sort of the beginning of the end for us. When I drove him home that night, his parents were awake and waiting. There was soot on his hands, and his breath still carried the sticky sweet smell of stale beer and sex.

At the time I had no idea what happened, just that I didn't see him for almost a month after that. I still remember one frantic phone call in the middle of

the night a few days after his sudden disappearance.

"Sasha, you've got to help me."

"Peter? Is that you? What the hell happened? Where have you been?"

Having come up with all kinds of unrealistically awful reasons for why he hadn't called, I wasn't sure whether to be excited or scared.

"It's my parents. They've fucking lost it. I'm on lockdown – I can't even get out of the house. I've been in here for weeks, Sasha! Months, maybe! I don't know what to do. I feel like I'm losing it."

Refraining from pointing out that it had been no more than a few days, I told him to calm down, that we'd figure something out.

"Oh shit," he exclaimed, then continued quietly, "My dad's coming. If he figures out it's you, he'll beat the shit out of me for sure. I have to go." And he hung up.

And that was it. I didn't hear from him again for the rest of the summer. Everything was kind of different after that. We still ate lunch together and he came over after school to hang out with me and my mom or take Reggie for her walks, but he wouldn't skip out on study halls with me to go to the beach, and we stopped going on driving adventures, and we never really talked about what happened. He had this look of quiet desperation in his eyes that stopped me every time I wanted to ask.

No one else really noticed. When I think back on it, neither of us really had a someone else to be noticing. We kind of had each other, and that was really it. That's what made it so much harder, walking through the halls next to him in awkward silence. I didn't know where else to turn, or what to do, so I just pretended that there was nothing wrong.

This worked out fine for a few months, but one day Pete just didn't show up to school. I didn't think anything of it until I got home and listened to the messages on the machine. His voice anxiously announced, "Patience is a pancake." At hearing those four words, I knew immediately that something was awry. After taking a moment to wonder why we hadn't bothered to come up with more situationally appropriate code phrases, I immediately grabbed Reggie and a few provisions and jumped in my car.

Half an hour later I was back at our secret base for the first time in months. Walking in, I could almost imagine I was stepping back in time to when the curtains were new and smelled like fresh laundry, and smiling nurses talked to patients and their loved ones in soft soothing voices. That was the kind of place it used to be. It used to mean sanctuary, and salvation.

When I opened my eyes, I saw Peter there, in the middle of an empty room, sitting in someone's old arm chair. The upholstery was torn and the foam inside was pouring out onto the floor, but he looked more put together than I had seen him in months.

We didn't say anything to each other. What was there to say? I handed him a plate of food I had taken from home and sat down in front of him on the floor. He looked at once determined and a little sad. He reached into his backpack on the floor beside him and pulled out a puppy treat to feed to Reggie.

"I can't do it anymore." He said wearily. "I'm done."

I nodded. "Come live with me. We're almost done with school, and after that we can go anywhere."

He shook his head. I knew there was no use arguing. I felt a tiny ball of anger forming in my throat and found myself choking back tears.

"Peter," I pleaded with him, "don't go."

He said nothing.

"What am I supposed to do? You're my best friend."

Again I was met with silence.

"Peter," I repeated, "don't go. Wait for me, and I'll come with you."

He didn't even look up at me. Not so much as a glance. He sat quietly looking down at the dog in his lap, wagging her tail happily, the two of them staunch and serene in a world of dust and disarray. Much as I would have loved to believe otherwise, there was no place for me there. So I got up and I walked away.

I cried all night, and the next morning they were gone. Every so often I still find a letter in the mailbox, postmarked Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, San Francisco, but there's never a return address

You Should Know Better

Kady Oliker

It's Christmas time, a time to be with friends and family but especially the people you love or at least think you love. You'd already blown off your best friend to have the best night of your life. You don't care how many times Carter told you it was a bad idea, you go with it anyway. You don't see, excuse me, don't want to see that Carter is the perfect one for you; all you see is the blond bombshell that has taken over your every thought. You've been dating this guy for a while, and you know it's time. You know everything has to be perfect. You envision candles and classical music filling the night air as rose petals litter your entire bed. You want this night to be flawless so when he asks you over on Saturday night, the first thing you do is go shopping for sexy lingerie. The store consists of so many different types you don't even know where to begin. The sales lady suggests a push-up bra to enhance your already too small breasts and matching shorts with a lacy garter belt. You lie in bed all week dreaming of his soft hands exploring your body, making your crave more. His soft lips brush past yours, making their way down your neck. But every time he tries to make his way past your belly button ring, you wake up screaming 'No!' As you come out of that dream-like trance, your heart beats too quickly and sweat beads up along your hairline and armpits, but it was just a dream.

Then comes Saturday. You spend all day agonizing over what scent of body wash to use and how to do your hair and makeup. At 4:00, you lie to your mother about spending the night at Stacey's house and begin the long process before escaping to Lucas' house. In the mirror that still holds pictures of your childhood, you begin to curl your hair meticulously. When that's complete, you take out your black eye liner and purple eye shadow to match your bra and generously apply them both. Next you look for a pair of silver hoops that are hiding in your Little Mermaid jewelry box and as you stare at Ariel, you realized that tonight you become a woman. You grab the perfume and apply dabs to your neck, wrists and behind your knees because Cosmo tells you too. You see the black coat hanging on the bedpost, grab it and put it over your very well matched outfit. You give your mom a kiss and proceed out the door and down the street to meet Lucas.

Your heart is still pounding load enough to the point where you think he can hear it long after he tells you how hot you look; you think 'just wait till he sees me out of this outfit' as he speeds down the street towards the river. He parks near a remote spot under a tree overlooking the star-studded water as you think how romantic this is. You head for the door handle, but he locks you in. You ask 'what about dinner?' and he responds with 'I thought we could skip dinner' as he leans over to kiss you. His lips are chapped and cracked and they taste nothing like you'd imagined. His breath reeks of cigarettes and he's moving way too fast for you, but you don't say anything. You take a deep breath and follow his lead, which is straight to the backseat. He rips off your shirt, then begins to tackle your bra without even commenting on it, all the while you're trying to get caught up

in the moment but just can't seem to. He begins to kiss down your stomach and cross the belly ring, you don't scream, you just breathe again and slide your hands under his shirt. A moment passes by and you ask if he's got a condom, he tells you it's just not his thing. You don't protest, you just keep right on breathing until you feel a rush of blood and a little bit of pain. It's over; he dismounts you, collects his clothes and moves back to the front seat. You do the same, grabbing your bra and ripped shirt, your garter belt with the matching shorts and try to assemble them on your body to the best of your ability. You climb back to the front seat next to him and listen for the engine to spark to life.

The streets wiz by as he drops you off on the corner next to your house. The sounds his car makes as he honks twice makes you crawl in your skin before he disappears into the foggy abyss of the night. As you walk towards your house, aside from explaining why you're not at Stacey's and why your shirt is ripped, you're thinking tonight you should have been making love under the mistletoe to the sound of sleigh bells with Carter instead of fucking in the backseat of Lucas' 65' Mustang to the smell of cheap wine and cigarettes.

COMICBOOKLAND

Nate Kamiya

Hey Spence,

I figured with all the certificates on the wall and the corner office why not give you a crack at this one?

So, long story short, the kid's your typical delusional case (a healthy dose of repressed anger, sexual confusion, etc. etc.), except with a twist -- he is obsessed with comics. He eviscerated his neighbor's cat while wearing tights and a cape. What's this world coming to?

There's a Nobel for you in this one if you can crack it. At the very least, I'll owe you a beer.

I gave him our usual prompt. He decided to answer the first part and completely ignored the second. Nothing special there.

Essay Response [2/14/2002]:
Think of a passion, and describe it in detail. Then, with equal detail, describe how that passion can become a tool for positively.

> *Each page is a like a window, and every panel a pane. It's up to you to fill in the movement, the voices, sounds, colors, and everything else in between. People look down on comic books, they think they're somehow less work to read than "regular" books. No I don't think that's true, and no, I'm not one of those people who's started calling them "graphic novels." That's just an acknowledgment that they somehow don't live up, that on its own, a comic book couldn't stand muster against Ulysses. So that's why I stubbornly refer to them as comic books. I do it because I respect them.*

-- 60 mg fluoxetine hydrochlorideorally once daily [begun 2/15/2002]

Here's my interview with him, obviously a lot less lucid when he talks than in his writing.

Recorded Interview (Transcript) [2/18/2002]:

> *"... well, that's interesting phrasing, certainly. I mean, what more is there to say? Of course it's an illusion. What does that make this, then? I don't want to become... what I'm trying to say is... we're all deluded anyways, right? What's the point? How are you going to define escape? We're all just escaping things. Freud said that. Of course I read them to escape. What's great about reality? Do you like coming here every day?"*

-- Lowered to 30 mg fluoxetine hydrochlorideorally orally once daily [begun 2/18/2002]

Incident Report [2:13pm 2/19/2002]

> [...] broke -------'s nose b.c. he "looked like fucking the Green Lantern. I hate the

Green Lantern." Group continued. Had him taken to Isolation. Change in meds rec.

I had to keep a straight face through the rest of the session. Most difficult 23 minutes of my life.

-- Switched to 16 mg perphenazine orally once daily [begun 2/18/2002]

Night watch log [3:13am 2/22/2002]
[whoever was on duty was even kind enough to take a picture, it's included in the file. If you just have to see it, take my advice and do so on an empty stomach, do you ever take a break for lunch by the way? I'm just wondering what the best way is to get ahead here…]

[…] used feces to create comic strip along doorframe and across wall. Was trying to set clothes on fire with overhead lighting before he was restrained. Taken to Isolation. Sleeping meds rec.

-- 16 mg perphenazine orally once daily
-- 60 mg phenobarbitone orally before night shift [begun 2/22/2002]

This is where it got weird. He started living out his comic book delusions literally. I mean literally as a comic book. He only moved in "frames." I didn't believe the on-duty nurse when she described it to me until I came in and watched him myself for an hour. AN HOUR. I finally had him sedated so I could figure out what to do with him.

It'd go something like this: he'd take a few steps, so he could get into position for his frame, then stay there frozen, only moving his lips to perform his "dialogue." It didn't matter that if the person he was talking to had left the room, he'd still be standing there, staring at where'd they'd been when he'd started talking as if they were still there having a conversation with him. I wish I had a video that I could show you, never saw anything like it in 16 years.

16 mg perphenazine orally once daily
60 mg phenobarbitone orally before night shift
450 ml xylomenoglophatine I.V. after morning meal [begun 2/24/02]

Notice that one that start with the x? I finally got some grant money, believe or not. Not that that's anything new to you. Whose ass do you

It gets even better after this. Here's some of our conversations over the course of the following week (remember he's saying all of this completely frozen):

"Whatever you've done with Lois, it won't be forgiven, not by me, not by Bruce, and not by humanity."

"Whenever I look into your cold, dead eyes, I know evil."

"When I get out of here, the world will know."

I wish I could remember all of them. The staff had made a corkboard of them in the nurse's station. If you're ever actually in the East Wing come check them out. I understand the Administrative floor is its own world, why bother making rounds in the places where the actual work gets done?

-- 16 mg perphenazine orally once daily
-- 60 mg phenobarbitone orally before night shift
-- 450 ml xylomenoglophatine I.V. after morning meal
-- 1046 ml liprosiamorphoninekryptoid with afternoon yogurt [begun 3/1/02]

The lipro made him start vibrating. I couldn't help it, I started laughing during rounds last Friday. What's-her-face with the big tits gave me a look. I also had to replace the night watch, he was getting attached to comic book boy.

Wasn't sure what to do next, so I went ahead and improvised. I know it isn't what you'd do, but hey, you've got that nice view, right? Why should you care.

-- 16 mg perphenazine orally once daily
-- 60 mg phenobarbitone orally before night shift
-- 450 ml xylomenoglophatine I.V. after morning meal
-- 1046 ml liprosiamorphoninekryptoid with afternoon yogurt
-- 45 mg Tide High Concentrate™

This was where he started getting a little lethargic. No more sexual response to any of the female staff. I changed the dress code to shorts and cleavage-complimenting tees. The kind your wife wears. I changed up the dosages a bit.

-- 16 mg perphenazine orally once daily
-- 60 mg phenobarbitone orally before night shift
-- 450 ml xylomenoglophatine I.V. after morning meal
-- 1046 ml liprosiamorphoninekryptoid with afternoon yogurt
-- 45 mg Tide High Concentrate™
-- 666 mg I fucked your wife.

Okay, obviously you can tell I'm joking. But really -- not really. I mean every position. Face in the pillow, just begging, begging for obviously something that she just hasn't been receiving in a long time. What with all that time you must spend dusting off those mahogany temples for all of your published work, I don't see how there's any time for your wife. But really, I should be the one feeling impotent right now. I know who's on the rise and whose star's faded. I know who'll be getting the grants and research assistants and who'll be stuck with hopeless in-patients. We both know who's gonna make it outta this shithole and who's going to work here till he get's his pension so he can retire early and spend the rest of his days sitting on his ass and drinking Metamucil. But you know, what? It's not all gonna be bad. Cause that pension'll be paying for more time for me to be fucking your wife. I hope that you've already found about this. That she called out my name the last time she climaxed. But honestly, when I consider which is more likely to happen first: that you'll get laid, or that you'll get this memo first, I just have to resign myself to reality.

Colophon

Designed by Sarah Miranda
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"In the Aboretum"

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We are large, we contain multitudes.

"You're searching...
For things that don't exist; I mean beginnings.
Ends and beginnings - there are no such things.
There are only middles."
Robert Frost