WR

Journal of the CAS Writing Program

Issue 4 ▪ 2011/2012

Editors

Ivan Eubanks

Marisa Milanese

Managing Editor

Alyssa Hall

Associate Editors

Kimberly Gomez

Gwen Kordonowy

Sarah Madsen Hardy

Assistant Editors

Scott Challener

Stephen Hodin

Rebecca Kinraide

David Shawn

Copyeditor

Melissa Schoenberger

Cover Image

Ars Longa, Vita Brevis

Saskia Ozols Eubanks

Design & Layout

Alyssa Hall

Editorial Board

Maria Gapotchenko

Theodora Goss

Bradley Queen

Melanie Smith

Jason Tandon

Writing Program Director

Joseph Bizup

http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal (ISSN 1948-4763)

Contents

Dedication

As a published journal of undergraduate writing, *WR* displays the achievements of some of BU's most talented student-writers. For many of these undergraduates, the journal also serves as a memorial of a transformative time in their lives, when they began living away from home, pursuing intellectual passions, and enjoying their independence at the beginning of their adult lives. With this volume, we remember the achievements of all of our students, including those who were killed in a May car accident in New Zealand: Roch Jauberty (CAS'14), Daniela Lekhno (SMG'13), and Austin Brashears (ENG'13).

— Seth Holm,
WR 150 instructor of
Roch Jauberty

Editor's Note

Of all the skills we hope students will cultivate during their time at Boston University, writing is among the most important and most difficult to master. It therefore follows that teaching writing is one of the most crucial of the activities undertaken by faculty in all disciplines, departments, and colleges. Consequentially, it is quite gratifying when students excel and achieve that magical balance of knowledge, insight, and the ability to express complex ideas in words, as the authors of the essays in this fourth issue of *WR* do.

The selection of student work published here reflects a standard of quality for first-year writing in which the CAS Writing Program faculty take pride. Each of these essays was developed in a WR course (at either the 098, 100, or 150 level) under the mentorship of an instructor and then refined with the guidance of an editor. After being submitted to the journal, the essays underwent a rigorous selection process, during which the editors, associate editors, editorial board members, and journal committee members read, evaluated, reread, and reevaluated approximately four hundred exemplary papers. At the culmination of the selection process, the editors elected a mere two percent of all submissions for publication in *WR*. Due to the volume of superb work produced in WR seminars in 2011–2012, it often proved difficult to choose one essay over another, and thus we compiled a list of "honorable mentions," fine essays that would have merited publication had space allowed.

When making their selections, the editors do not prioritize any particular theme, subject matter, discipline, or methodology. Nevertheless, fortunate coincidences sometimes do occur, such as in this year's issue of the journal, which features a series of compelling essays that can all be seen as different introspective inquiries into the nature of American culture. In

her prize-winning essay, for example, Ying Zhang contemplates the nature of identity for someone who goes by different first names and experiences different senses of self in America versus in China. We also have some fine pieces on monumental American thinkers, such as Sophie Spiers' prize-winning essay on Frederick Douglas, and George Danis' prize-winning work on T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." This issue also includes work on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D. C., the first amendment to the U. S. Constitution, illegal immigrants in the food industry, and clinical trials conducted in Africa in light of the Tuskegee scandal.

All of these essays should be considered great accomplishments. In order to write them, the authors had to acquire a significant amount of new knowledge, exercise a greater hermeneutic capacity than ever before, work in a new genre (the college essay), an express themselves with a level of sophistication and eloquence not previously required of them. They have all done so marvelously, and so I hope they are as proud of themselves, and that their teachers are as proud of them, as the editorial board is to present them as the authors of this issue of *WR*.

— Ivan Eubanks, Ph.D.
Editor

From the Instructor

Questions that might seem absurdly simple to one who has always lived in the same culture often turn out to be extremely complex for the immigrant, the child of a multicultural family, or the international student: what is my real name, my real home, my real language, my real self? In an extremely insightful essay, Ying Zhang (Phoebe) confronts these questions as they affect both her and the narrators or protagonists of several literary works. The assignment for Essay 3 in WR 098 was to write a synthesis and analysis essay examining a theme as it is developed in the memoir *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language,* by Polish-Canadian-American journalist Eva Hoffman, and in two other sources. For her second source, Phoebe chose *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri, a novel about a boy born in the US to Indian immigrants and given the unusual first name of Gogol, after the father's favorite author. For her third source, Phoebe selected "Cultural Baggage," Barbara Ehrenreich's manifesto rejecting her multifarious ethnic background in favor of her family's legacy of intellectualism and critical thinking.

To these three examples Phoebe adds her own experience as a Chinese student at BU, trying to negotiate between her native culture and the new culture in which she is immersed. As Phoebe notes, each of the four persons described resolves his or her conflict in a different way. And, while she has entitled her essay "An Unanswerable Dilemma," Phoebe has in fact shed a great deal of light on this vexed question.

— Thomas Oller

From the Writer

As my class was discussing *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language,* a short novel written by Eva Hoffman, we reached a question about searching for identity while facing multicultural circumstances. I found it relatively easy for me to find a topic for my final paper because I am the one who is facing a multicultural environment. Moreover, I had read Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, which is also talking about identifying oneself in a multicultural environment. Hence, I decided to use my personal experience and the book I read before to further question whether people can succeed in finding their identities.

After I made up my mind, I kept asking myself the same question and tried to weave my emotion into this essay. Then, I had trouble when I was actually writing the essay. I wrote with too much personal emotion, which made it more like a biography than a comparative essay. However, it was an obstacle for me to remove any parts of my personal experience since those are the strongest support for my argument. By reviewing the second draft a few times, I decided to make some changes. Instead of simply describing my experience, I broke it into pieces and added the primary material in between. In this way, I finally made this essay more objective, but it still contains all of my experience and emotion.

— Ying Zhang

Ying Zhang

Prize Essay Winner

An Unanswerable Dilemma

I stand bolt upright like a statue in front of the customs officer waiting for permission to pass through customs. "What's your name?" "Phoebe." A suspicious look shoots from the officer's eyes. "It doesn't match your record." Then I suddenly remember that my legal name is Ying. I have just gotten too used to being called Phoebe. The passport profile picture taken a few years ago looks somewhat like a stranger. My legal name is Ying, but I visualize the differences. My English name is Phoebe, but it does not completely represent me. I ask about who I am, but I never find an answer. Eva Hoffman, the author of Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language, also questions her identity in a new country in face of assimilation. Name change and language diffusion exacerbate Eva's confusion, to which she never finds a solution. Likewise, Gogol, an America-born Indian man in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake, experiences confusion due to the change of his name. However, he succeeds in identifying himself in the end because he realizes the importance of his original culture. Barbara Ehrenreich, the author of "Cultural Baggage," fails to identify herself but decides to create a new heritage on her own. Although Eva, Gogol, Barbara, and I all have trouble in giving ourselves appropriate identities, Eva and I cannot solve the dilemma as easily as Gogol and Barbara since it is hard to draw a clear line in the process of assimilation.

Names are always seen as symbols that help people to communicate with each other, but they play an important role for people to identify themselves. In America, I act like Phoebe and try to suppress Ying in my psyche. In order to achieve a comfortable life in this new environment, I strive to blank out my heritage and assimilate to American culture. When

I go back to China, I lock Phoebe into my unconsciousness and switch to being Ying. Yet, chaos emerges as I frequently switch back and forth between two names. I cannot help thinking in an Americanized way even though I am in China. Gradually, I find it hard to communicate with Chinese because I think completely differently. Meanwhile, I blame myself for being exotic. The inner mental contradiction confuses me about my real identity. Certainly I am not an American, but it seems that I am not a real Chinese either.

Eva is in the same situation as I am. Eva initially senses a loss of identity when she is granted a new name in Canada. She states that, "our Polish name didn't refer to us; they were as surely us as our eyes or hands. These new appellations, which we ourselves can't yet pronounce, are not us . . . We walk to our seats into a roomful of unknown faces, with names that make us strangers to ourselves" (Hoffman 105). In Eva's perspective, a new name represents a new identity, which is a detachment from her original heritage. No matter how aggressively she resists the new surroundings, she has to compromise on assimilation. Eva further asks herself, "Who was I, after all? Eva's ghost, perhaps, a specter that tried not to occupy too much space" (114). As Eva intends to preserve Polish identity, she not only confuses herself about who she is but also realizes that assimilation already reshapes her and makes her different from before.

While also experiencing identity confusion from a change of names, Gogol is nevertheless able to define his identity. Since Gogol is born after his father survives a horrific train accident in which few others survive, his father sees the name Gogol as a pet name to signal his rebirth. However, Gogol does not understand how meaningful his name is when he is young. Later on, Gogol develops resentment toward this name during adolescence and decides to use his legal name, Nikhil, as an overcoat to escape from Indian culture. Although the name Nikhil brings him more confidence, Gogol is always present inside him. Soon he feels a sense of futility and dissatisfaction about avoiding his roots: "Without people in the world to call him Gogol, no matter how long he himself lives, Gogol Ganguli will, once and for all, vanish from the lips of loved ones, and so, cease to exist. Yet the thought of this eventual demise provides no sense of victory, no solace. It provides no solace at all" (Lahiri 289). All his efforts pay him back with confusion about who he truly is. He sees himself as Nikhil,

striving to be truly American, yet he fails to eradicate Gogol. By the end, he chooses to stick with "Gogol," is Indian identity, since he realizes that everything that he has gone through, from the botched naming attempt at his birth (Gogol) to his realization of the hope behind Gogol, is the meaningful fragment to define who he is.

Such confusion is not only triggered by a change of name, but also affected by language. Eva is threatened by a language crisis after moving to Canada. When she wants to record her life in a diary, she hesitates about whether to use English or Polish. Eva writes, "If I am indeed to write something entirely for myself, in what language do I write? Several times, I open the diary and close it again. I can't decide" (Hoffman 120). Later on, Eva still decides to use English, since only English can represent her current situation. The more often she uses English, the more she loses Polish. Eva explains, "I'm not filled with language anymore, and I have only a memory of fullness to anguish me with knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don't really exist" (108). Without language, it is impossible for people to understand each other. I also notice a severe problem of my ability to learn more English and maintain Chinese well at the same time. As Chinese becomes less accessible for me in America, I adapt to English much better. All the books I read and the essays I write are in English. I was not aware of the potential dilemma until one day, when I was reading a Chinese novel, I got stuck a couple of times because I could not really comprehend the phrases and I had to translate them into English in order to continue reading. This increases my confusion about my current identity. My first language Chinese is slowly diminishing. But meanwhile, I am not proficient at English. Then where do I belong and who am I? Eva and I no longer fully understand our first language, yet we are not completely adept in English as native speakers. We have difficulties communicating with both sides, which blurs our certainty about who we are.

Aside from Gogol, who successfully retrieves his Indian identity by accepting the name Gogol in the end, Eva is pessimistic in dealing with confusion. Definitely it is tough for Eva to mingle her Polish culture with American culture and still clearly recognize her identity. Eva carries the burden of identity confusion all the time. She never stops finding the sources of confusion instead of seeking solutions to eliminate such confusion. Driven by this psyche, Eva does not know how to manipulate her life

toward her future. She asks, "But where to? I have no map of experience before me, not even the usual adolescent kind . . . and later, when the dams of envy burst open again, I am most jealous of those who, in America, have had a sense of place" (Hoffman 159). Eva's accumulated confusion invisibly makes her purposely exclude herself from the new environment. In the end, she, in fact, notices the cause of confusion is her resistance to the new world. Nevertheless, assimilation is a stumbling block that puzzles Eva about finding a balance between her Polish identity and her new identity.

While Eva is trapped by confusion, Barbara Ehrenreich is able to jump out from the problem, probably because her situation is different from Eva's. Unlike other people around her, Barbara cannot identify herself with a particular ethnic heritage. In addition, her complex ancestry baffles her in her search for an identity. She remembers the answer she gave to a question on her ethnic background. "'None,' I said, that being the first word in line to get out of my mouth. Well, not 'none,' I backtracked. Scottish, English, Irish—that was something, I supposed" (64). After many failures, Barbara makes up her mind to identify herself by intellectual heritage, which is to "try new things" and "think for yourself." She asks, "What better philosophy, for a race of migrants, than 'think for yourself'? What better maxim, for a people whose world was rudely inverted every thirty years or so, than 'try new things'" (66). By implying this novel idea, Barbara discovers her identity. Additionally she argues that intellectual heritage is as crucial as ethnic heritage, "To which I would say that skepticism, curiosity, and wide-eyed ecumenical tolerance are also worthy elements of the human tradition" (66). Identity is not all about ethnic heritage; indeed, it is largely influenced by different intellectual perspectives.

A powerful desire drives me to imitate Barbara's solution. However, even though I highly appreciate her creativity, her solution is hard to apply to me or to Eva. Both Eva and I are significantly influenced by our original cultures. Consequently, we can barely remove them from our cognition. As for Gogol, he is exposed to American and Indian culture throughout his whole life. Yet his task is to clarify and embrace his original heritage. Although he has plenty of pressure from his families and friends while struggling for the decision, it is relatively easier for Gogol to figure out his choice compared to Eva and me. As for Barbara, her confusion does not even come from cultural convergence. It is clear that she is an American.

She is confused because of her complex ancestry and because of peer pressure to have a sense of ethnicity. Eva and I are dealing with "How"—how to balance our heritage and the new culture. Gogol and Barbara are dealing with "Which"—which culture they should choose. I am sure that immigrants as well as foreign students like me all undergo this self-questioning process that is probably caused by name change, language diffusion, and perhaps other factors that I have not yet encountered. It is common to question one's identity, yet the trauma cannot be cured so easily.

Eva, Gogol, Barbara, and I all are the victims of identity confusion. However, Gogol and Barbara are luckier because they do not face the consequences of dealing with assimilation. As for Eva, it seems that she still cannot unburden herself of bafflement about who she is. I am not sure whether I will be able to define myself in the future either. For Barbara and Gogol, the culture shock is not powerful because they are born and raised in America. The source of confusion for Gogol is more likely to be chaos caused by admitting his original culture whereas the source for Barbara is complex ethnic heritage. The situation for Eva and me, or for those who face assimilation, is different. It is hard to balance two different cultures, particularly when there is one already rooted in. I wonder if anybody who has the same situation as Eva and I can offer an authentic answer for this dilemma in the future. At least for now, it is an unanswerable dilemma.

Works Cited

Ehrenreich, Barbara. "Cultural Baggage." The Norton Mix. Ed. Elizabeth Rodriguez Kessler. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010. 63–66. Print

Hoffman, Eva. Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc, 1989. Print.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. The Namesake. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. Print.

YING ZHANG, Class of 2015, is majoring in mathematics and human geography in the College of Arts and Sciences. She came across various problems as a Chinese international student in an American high school, such as language barriers and culture shock. Her own experience makes her interested in the topic of seeking an identity in a multicultural society. This essay was written for Thomas Oller's course, WR 098.

From the Instructor

For a writer, an orator, or a critic, how important is credibility? This is the question that Sophie Spiers sought to answer in a series of essays she wrote for my WR 100 course, "Oratory in America." The essay included here, "Frederick Douglass: The [In]Credible Orator," which was selected by the editors of *WR* as the prize-winner for the best WR 100 essay for the 2011–2012 academic year, culminated her writing for the semester.

In order to make the kind of nuanced and sensitive arguments that are essential to credible claims, Sophie worked on a number of important rhetorical moves, including a judicious use of first person. Like many students, Sophie was unaccustomed to using first person in her academic writing. Over time, however, she discovered how the first person point of view contributed to her rhetorical arsenal. We can see in this essay, for example, how the use of first person allows her to assert her own voice and to make clear to readers important distinctions between her views and those of others.

The essay also demonstrates close reading of several texts, acknowledgement of and responses to alternative viewpoints, and concessions to legitimate objections to her claim. Throughout, the essay sustains a clear argument that compares the rhetoric of three significant nineteenth-century abolitionists, who also endorsed women's rights. As you can see, Sophie claims that the rhetoric of Frederick Douglass, far more successfully than that of William Lloyd Garrison or Sarah Grimké, manifests credibility because of his sensitivity to the dangers inherent in linking two independent and radical reforms.

I hope you enjoy reading this essay as much as I did. Sophie's hard work, her willingness to take intellectual risks, and her commitment to excellence allowed her to grow into an exceptional (and quite credible) writer. I am very happy to share this excellent essay with you.

— David Shawn

From the Writer

The final essay assignment in WR 100 allowed us a lot of freedom in choosing which rhetoric we wanted to discuss in our papers. The speakers I chose—Frederick Douglass, Sarah Grimké, and William Lloyd Garrison—were not only great writers and speakers, but also important vehicles of societal change. While their greatness certainly links them, I was initially unsure of how to further connect them in my paper. After considering my interest in the subject, I decided to focus on the specific tactics and devices these figures implemented—and the different ways in which they applied them—to promote positive change during the abolition and women's rights movements. Studying the rhetorical methods that promoted positive change in the past is important if we are to continue to better our society.

— Sophie Spiers

Sophie Spiers

Prize Essay Winner

Frederick Douglass, The (In)credible Orator

In every formative period in history, a few individuals' actions and words stand apart from the rest of society. Abraham Lincoln's *Second Inaugural Address* exemplifies the near destruction of the Union; FDR's *Fireside Chats* are central to the Great Depression; and Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech is representative of the entire Civil Rights Movement. During the mid to late 1800s, when anti-slavery sentiments were at their peak, women also began to find their voices in the fight for the equality and liberty of all humans. The women's rights movement quickly gained momentum and, simultaneously, built an association with the abolition movement. While some abolitionists could not bring themselves to support women's quest for equality, others, such as Sarah Grimké, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass, became fervent advocates. In rising to represent the unification of abolition and women's rights, these figures made a prominent mark on history; no one can deny their genuine belief in and desire for equality and liberty, nor can we ignore the moral correctness of their aims. What I intend to examine and question, however, is the *credibility* they demonstrate in their rhetoric: do Grimké, Garrison, and Douglass present themselves as credible representatives of the union of abolition and women's rights? In other words, do all of these figures demonstrate an understanding of the fragile relationship between these two movements? In answering these questions, I not only intend to describe the fragility of this relationship, but also to emphasize that credibility is most apparent when one demonstrates sensitivity to the dangers inherent in such a fragile relationship. In my view, Douglass, in his implicit characterization of the opponent, his passionate yet conscious tone, and

his tactful mention of both women *and* slaves, demonstrates a clear understanding of the danger in associating women's rights and anti-slavery, and is therefore a more credible representative of these movements than Grimké or Garrison.

In today's society, women continue to gain prestige and power as doctors, lawyers, and executives. Such opportunity, unfortunately, was not available during Sarah Grimké's time. During the height of her career, Grimké's gender, as well as her outspoken approach to representing the woman movement, garnered a great deal of opposition. So much so that she not only "had trouble obtaining venues in which to speak," but was also "frequently heckled" (Reid and Klumpp 316). Animosity against Grimké's support for the abolition movement continued to build, as those opposed to abolition accused her of "seeking black husbands" (Reid and Klumpp 316). Grimké was not the only target of criticism and anger; the entire concept of uniting abolition and women's rights was largely met with hostility and disapproval.

Linking women and abolitionists created a delicate relationship between the two movements, so that remarks regarding one threatened to diminish the following of the other. According to critic Aileen Kraditor, the movements' orators "had to consider the expediency of any position they might adopt on women's rights in a period in which abolitionism was gaining many converts who would be repelled by . . . the equality of the sexes" (40). In her essay, Kraditor also emphasizes how "most advocates of the more popular reform endorsed the prevailing disapproval of the other" (40). So as not to deter support, it was imperative that advocates find balance between the two issues. In the specific case of the abolition and woman movements, employing rhetorical approaches to maintain this balance, in my view, equates to credibility. In his speeches Douglass employs several such rhetorical devices: he addresses and defines the opponent without attacking that opponent; he promotes his views while remaining conscious of his audience; and finally, he makes equal mention of both movements to clearly establish their relatedness. Douglass, more so than Grimké or Garrison, demonstrates an awareness of the necessity of balance, tailors his writing to fit this balance, and establishes credibility in his rhetoric.

At the heart of both the anti-slavery and the women's rights movements were anger, hostility, and an overwhelming desire to combat the opponent. To overcome these emotions, it was crucial for speakers to help their audience understand the opponent. Grimké and Garrison were vocal in identifying the white male as the villain, and in condemning his actions. To Grimké, man and his tyrannical nature, "adorned the creature whom God gave him as a companion, with baubles and gewgaws . . . and made her the instrument of his selfish gratification, a plaything to please his eye and amuse his hours of leisure" (321). She describes man's assertion over woman as a "war he has waged against her mind, her heart, and her soul," and even characterizes the very idea of female subservience as "monstrous" and "anti-Christian" (321). Grimké makes no concession in her description of man, in general, as an evil being. Equally outspoken and unapologetic in his description of the opponent is Garrison in his commentary on a debate over women's rights at the Boston Lyceum. In referring to men as "impounders of stray women," Garrison suggests a tendency for "tyrannical men" to treat women as less than human (99, 100). He echoes this sentiment when he declares men to be "the usurpers of mankind" (100). Garrison views men as both a threat to women and a source of destruction to mankind in general. Grimké and Garrison not only identify the opponent, but also manage to publically denounce him with their unforgiving, blunt, and pointed characterizations.

Contrary to Grimké and Garrison's critical, brazen rhetoric, Douglass employs implicit, rather than explicit, tactics in addressing the opposition. He does not declare man an "impounder" of women or a war-wager. In fact, Douglass does not specifically mention "man" at all. Instead, he makes general mention of his adversaries when he states, "many who have at last made the discovery that the negroes have some rights . . . have yet to be convinced that women are entitled to any" ("Editorial" 84). Using a similar tactic, he again refers to "a number of persons of this description," and continues to describe "the judgment of such persons" ("Editorial" 84–85). As a supporter of the same movements as Grimké and Garrison, we can assume Douglass shares with them a common opponent. Unlike his fellow reformers, however, Douglass' implicit, vague references to "such persons" do not come across as harsh; he may condemn the adversaries' views, but he refrains from insulting and personally attacking them. This restraint is

evidence of his unwillingness to jeopardize either women or slaves in their movements for equality, and helps to establish his credibility as an orator.

Characterization of the opponent is not the only area where Grimké and Garrison demonstrate passionate, emotionally charged rhetoric. The overall tones of both speakers also strike an unwaveringly intense chord. At the very outset of her "Response to the Pastoral Letter," Grimké exhibits a propensity toward dramatic rhetoric when she refers to the pastors as "[t]hose . . . who are now endeavoring to smother the irreplaceable desire for mental and spiritual freedom which glows in the breast of many, who hardly dare to speak their sentiments" (320). Grimké's statements increase in intensity as she continues to promote her position; she declares, "Alas! She has too well learned the lesson which MAN has labored to teach her. She has surrendered her dearest RIGHTS, and has been satisfied with the privileges which man has assumed to grant her" (321). Her use of capital letters and exclamatory punctuation smacks of a forceful, unrelenting tone.

Equally as bold, but arguably more insulting, is the nature of Garrison's writing. In reporting on the debate at the Boston Lyceum, Garrison calls the arguments proposed by those averse to women's rights "bad illustrations and worse witticisms" (99). He considers them "barbarous," and "not entitled to Christian consideration" (100). Garrison's blatant disagreement with the subjects of his critique is again underlined when he demands, "A most unmeaning flourish of words! Can any reason be given, why a man may not jointly rule in the same empire? Why he should not govern solely by love as well as woman?" (100). Given his position on women's rights, we could expect Garrison to demonstrate some favoritism toward the pro-women's side of the debate. In his commentary, however, Garrison's aggressive tone is more than a product of favoritism. His insulting, belligerent depiction of the other side's arguments is uncompromisingly partial, and shows no sensitivity to any views other than his own. While their passion is admirable, Grimké and Garrison's pieces are aggressive in tone, and appear intolerant of other points of view. Such intolerance could leave the audience feeling attacked during a time when reform success is largely dependent on audience support.

There are certain speeches in which Douglass' tone mirrors Grimké and Garrison's more vigorous styles. As an escaped slave and a fervent proponent of abolition, Douglass delivered many speeches urging the

immediate cessation of slavery. The most notorious examples are products of his passionate views and what one biographer describes as his "'rich voice, handsome physique and superb command of the English language'" (qtd. in Reid and Klumpp 338). In his oration entitled "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" Douglass employs the emotional, powerful rhetoric that is characteristic of his speeches dealing *solely* with abolition. In addressing his audience, Douglass declares,

> This Fourth of July is *yours*, not *mine*. *You* may rejoice, *I* must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. ("Fourth of July" 341)

In emphasizing the separation that exists between himself, as a slave, and his audience of white women, Douglass highlights his listeners' naïveté; he uses theatrical and pointed speech as a means of inducing guilt in his audience, and opening their eyes to the cruelty of slavery. Given Douglass' tendency toward this type of robust rhetoric, the balanced, restrained tone he implements in his *North Star* editorial on women's rights is of even greater note; Douglass recognizes that when dealing with slaves *and* women, his rhetoric must adapt to his audience.

Despite his ability to passionately emote in front of a crowd, Douglass was highly praised by critics for his even temper. According to Margaret Fuller, Douglass "seems very just and temperate. We feel that his view, even of those who have injured him most, may be relied upon. He knows how to allow for motives and influences" ("Narrative of Frederick Douglass" 356). Fuller's depiction of Douglass holds especially true for his editorial in the *North Star*, where instead of broad, emotional statements, he uses logical appeals to explain his views. While describing his belief in women's rights, he states,

> We are free to say that in respect to political rights, we hold woman to be justly entitled to all we claim for man. We go farther, and express our conviction that all political rights which it is expedient for man to exercise, it is equally so for woman. ("Editorial" 85)

While his proclamations could seem rather flat compared to Grimké's or Garrison's, Douglass manages to present the same arguments about equality in a way that limits insult and offense. His logic shines through again when he reasons,

> And if that government only is just which governs by the free consent of the governed, there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise, or a hand in making and administering the laws of the land. ("Editorial" 85)

Douglass' conclusion about the government's intended role is not only sensible, but also difficult to dispute; anyone who believes in the democratic principles upon which our nation is founded should have a difficult time denying rights of freedom and equality. Douglass pinpoints a loophole in his audience's reasoning, and responds to it with his clear rationale. Thus, he once again demonstrates a consciousness of his audience, which, as evidenced by their overtly emotional rhetoric, Grimké and Garrison do not.

It is not my intent to suggest that credible rhetoric leaves no room for emotional appeals. On the contrary, emotion is often a useful embellishment to rational arguments. My interpretation of credibility depends on the specific period when women's rights and abolition merged together. To some, this dependency could render my standards for credibility unduly narrow. In my view, there is no generic definition of credibility; what is "credible" in one situation could be different from what is "credible" under a completely different set of circumstances. In terms of slavery and women's rights, the delicacy of this reform period did not allow for bursts of passion, where there was the potential for hurt feelings and bitter reactions. Superfluous displays of emotion threatened the already unsteady union of the reforms. Thus, emotion was not the keystone of credible rhetoric during this time, but a deterrent to one's credibility. To be credible, the rhetoric of the time needed balance.

The final component to my definition of credible rhetoric involves clear, equal incorporation of the abolition and woman causes. When two monumental reforms join hands, one expects to see extensive overlap between the rhetoric of each. It seems only natural that abolitionists would mention women, and vice versa, in speeches and editorials. Furthermore, one would expect the mention to be made with great care, and with an

awareness of the possible implications of representing a neighboring movement. This is not the case in the pieces by Grimké and Garrison. Throughout her entire response to the Ministers of Massachusetts, Grimké mentions slavery once, and while she boldly asserts her belief in freedom and equality—both of which are at the core of abolition—she focuses almost exclusively on women. Her one mention of slavery comes when she says,

> I rejoice, because I am persuaded that the rights of woman, like the rights of slaves, need only be examined to be understood and asserted, even by some of those, who are now endeavoring to smother the irreplaceable desire for mental and spiritual freedom which glows in the breast of many, who hardly dare to speak their sentiments. (320)

Grimké's simple mention of "the rights of slaves" seems haphazard in its placement, and plays into the opposition's view that women's rights was an "'extraneous' issue," that was "tacked…onto the antislavery movement" (Kraditor 40). While the limited number of references to slavery is alarming, I take issue more with Grimké's disregard for the comments she makes *after* her reference to slaves' rights. Her discussion of "those, who are now endeavoring to smother the irreplaceable desire for mental and spiritual freedom," once again uses extreme rhetoric to create an unforgiving view of the opponent. By associating slavery with such bold remarks, Grimké risks misrepresenting her fellow movement. Garrison, while he extends his mention of slavery in his editorial, is also abrasive in his rhetoric. He describes the men's debate on women's rights by stating,

> It was like a meeting of slaveholders to discuss with all gravity the question, whether their slaves, if emancipated, would be in a better condition than if kept in bondage; and having muzzled their victims, so that their wishes could not be expressed or known, coming to the rational conclusion that to extend their "appropriate sphere" beyond the boundaries of a plantation, would be injurious to them and destructive to the welfare of society! (100)

Garrison provides his own interpretation of a "meeting of slaveholders," and summarizes what he considers the oppositions' conclusions regarding slavery. In doing so, he once again portrays the opponent as a tyrannical

force. Garrison's conclusions seem too bold for a public figure that desires to build support for both women and anti-slavery. His remarks could easily upset the slaveholders he describes, and in turn, could endanger the abolition movement. A level of carelessness in representing both movements is apparent in Grimké's and Garrison's rhetoric, and further discounts the credibility of their words.

Perhaps Douglass's most impressive display of balance is in his equal mention of abolition and women's rights. He manages to reference the two reforms, while emphasizing the core values and goals that unite them. Early in his editorial, Douglass acknowledges the delicate relationship between the movements when he explains,

> Eight years ago a number of persons…actually abandoned the anti-slavery cause, lest by giving their influence in that direction they might possibly be giving countenance to the dangerous heresy that woman, in respect to rights, stands on an equal footing with man. ("Editorial" 85)

Douglass immediately recognizes the growing uncertainty of some abolitionists surrounding the incorporation of the woman movement, and attempts to prevent further uncertainty when he discusses human duty and morality in promoting freedom and equality. Douglass proclaims, "Standing as we do upon the watch-tower of human freedom, we cannot be deterred from an expression of our approbation of any movement, however, humble, to improve and elevate the character of any members of the human family" ("Editorial" 85). In dedicating much of his rhetoric to promoting general principles, Douglass avoids favoritism of one movement over the other. His representation of the two movements as one united effort displays deference for each individual movement, and recognizes the fragility of the relationship between them. Neither Grimké nor Garrison proves able to achieve this balance, which is the final reason why their rhetoric lacks the credibility of Douglass's.

So often we equate fame and prestige with perfection. Those whose influence manages to stand the test of time, we consider flawless and above criticism. There is no denying the honor and respect with which today's society regards the abolition and woman movements. Without courageous, moral reformers such as Grimké, Garrison, and Douglass, our society may never have realized its egregious error in denying both slaves and women

the equality and liberty on which the United States is based. While I do not dispute the importance of these reformers, I cannot help but question how their rhetoric influenced the eventual outcomes of both movements: how did their messages, and the way in which they presented those messages, affect anti-slavery? Women's rights? Would the pace or the outcome of the reforms have been different had the rhetoric been less emotional? More balanced? While we may be incapable of answering these questions, any orator who wishes to effect lasting change must consider them. In leading major movements, speakers have an obligation to envision the possible outcomes and implications of their words. As voices of unification, Grimké, Garrison, and Douglass needed to speak for both women and slaves. Grimké and Garrison chose emotional, harsh, and imbalanced rhetoric to express their views. In contrast, Douglass approached his audience in a rational, clear, and balanced way. Douglass, therefore, established himself as a particularly worthy and credible orator.

Works Cited

Douglass, Frederick. "Editorial from *The North Star*." *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*. Ed. Miriam Schneir. New York: Vintage, 1972. 83–85. Print.

---. "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" *American Rhetorical Discourse*. Ed. Ronald Reid and James Klumpp. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005. 340–343. Print.

Fuller, Margaret. "On the Narrative of Frederick Douglass." *The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings*. Ed. Lawrence Buell. New York: Modern Library, 2006. 354–356. Print.

Garrison, William Lloyd. "Rights of Woman." *William L. Garrison and the Fights Against Slavery: Selections from* The Liberator. Ed William E. Cain. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995. 97–101. Print

Grimké, Sarah. "Response to the Pastoral Letter of the General Association of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts."*American Rhetorical Discourse*. Ed. Ronald Reid and James Klumpp. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005. 317–320. Print.

Kraditor, Eileen. "The Woman Question." *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism–Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1967. 39–77. Reprint. 1989.

Reid, Ronald E., and James F. Klumpp. Introduction to "Pastoral Letter and Response to the Pastoral Letter." *American Rhetorical Discourse*. Ed. Ronald Reid and James Klumpp. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005. 315–317. Print.

---. Introduction to "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" *American Rhetorical Discourse*. Ed. Ronald Reid and James Klumpp. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005. 338–330. Print.

SOPHIE PEARL SPIERS, originally from Concord, Massachusetts, is a rising sophomore in BU's College of Arts and Sciences. She is double majoring in international relations and French. Sophie is honored to have been recognized by those involved in WR, and would like to thank her WR 100 professor, David Shawn, for his support in writing and revising this essay. This essay was written for David Shawn's course, WR 100: Oratory in America.

From the Instructor

In WR 100: Documentary Film: History, Theory, and Form, we study a range of documentary films and the formal and ethical choices that shape them. Ethics are central to the documentary *Capturing the Friedmans* in a number of ways, from the lurid crimes allegedly committed by two members of the Friedman family to the potential exploitation of the film's subjects by the filmmaker, Andrew Jarecki. Ben Eisen's essay makes a genuine contribution to the scholarship on the film, arguing that the film's ethical lapses have some redeeming value for the Friedmans. This is the final paper that he wrote for my seminar, and the assignment was intentionally undefined to prepare students for the more open-ended assignments that they'll encounter in future classes. I asked students to generate a question about any of our films, and they had to draw on evidence from the film and any of our semester's many readings to answer it.

Two students and I critiqued an early version of this paper in a group conference. Each of us admired the general argument that Ben was pursuing, but we struggled to understand some sections. The reason, as one student so clearly put it, is that Ben's sentences were "pretty" but "easy to get lost in." The version that you see here is the fourth or fifth draft. With each revision, he tightened his language and, in the process, clarified his own thinking. In this way, this paper is a testament not just to Ben's creativity and discipline, but to the value of extensive feedback. Indeed, the excellent students in his WR 100 seminar helped to form and refine Ben's argument so that you would enjoy reading it as much as they did.

— Marisa Milanese

From the Writer

When selecting a documentary to write about for my final paper, the choice was easy. Capturing the Friedmans has Jews, molestation, and clowns—what could be more compelling? The documentary plays like a nonfictional revamp of Blue Velvet, exposing the seedy underbelly of a seemingly idyllic town and normal American family. Like David Lynch's classic, *Capturing the Friedmans* also proves depressing, disturbing, and surprisingly humane. But unlike Blue Velvet—in which the characters are fictional and thus saved from real public scrutiny—*Capturing the Friedmans* weighs its subjects under a harsh light that changes the public perception of the troubled titular family. After struggling with an essay topic, I chose to explore the question of who is ultimately responsible for the way the Friedmans are represented in the film. Since writing this essay, I've learned how to tighten my arguments (I apologize in advance for the wordiness and repetition) and make my writing a little more interesting to read. Fortunately, I've had the help of two great professors, Marisa Milanese and William Giraldi, who have reiterated the importance of being diplomatic and dynamic in writing, whether in discussing incorrigible Updikian protagonists or tempestuous birthday clowns.

— Benjamin Eisen

Benjamin Eisen

How Do I Look? Questioning the Control of Representation in *Capturing the Friedmans*

Over the years, documentary film has grown from its early authoritative voice-of-God style to more complex and propagandistic forms such as direct address. While modern documentaries still contain directorial bias, the use of new styles and technologies has distributed power among more participants within the film and complicated viewers' perceptions of the subjects. In the notable documentary *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003), director Andrew Jarecki combines intimate home video, news footage, and various interviews to share the story of a family's dissolution during and after an investigation of the father and youngest son for child molestation. Although the Friedmans allowed Jarecki to publicize their story and use their home video, critic Kenneth Turan questioned, "Even if the Friedmans approved of their own exploitation, does that mean they were less taken advantage of?" In addition to challenging Jarecki's ethics, Turan indirectly questions who was responsible for the way the Friedmans are represented in the film. While not yet collaborative, the relationship between director and subject initially seems somewhat cooperative in *Capturing the Friedmans* due to its reliance on home video and interviews. However, while these documentary techniques offer the Friedmans limited power, the control is primarily illusory, and Jarecki assumes the majority of the responsibility for their representation. Despite the Friedmans' restricted control and Jarecki's ultimate manipulation of the family, the Friedmans still relay a more balanced, complex, and humanized view of themselves to the public through the home videos and interviews. Ultimately, though, the viewer is responsible for understanding the role the subjects play in their own

representation in order to recognize their humanity and to fairly interpret them.

In order to grasp the complexity of representation in *Capturing the Friedmans*, the viewer must understand the background of home video and appreciate the camera operator's influence on the video. Beginning in the 1980s, the emergence of new technologies and ever-increasing access to video cameras led to extensive documentation of the nuclear family. According to Marsha and Devin Orgeron, "The nuclear family's most important recreation was itself. Home movies conscripted 'togetherness,' family harmony, children, and travel into a performance of familialism" (49). Home videos promoted exhibitionism within families and complicated relationships by offering a "more critical way of capturing the family" (50). With a video camera, family members could corroborate their claims and opinions of other members with visual evidence. As people obsessively filmed daily life, they developed "a kind of neuroses" and looked to documentation for more than mere diversion. Susan Sontag contends more shrewdly that filming has become "a social rite, a defense against anxiety, and a tool of power" (8). When people capture with a camera, they "take possession of space in which they are insecure" (9) and often "[encourage] whatever is going on to keep on happening" (12). In this light, home video does not offer an idyllic image of domesticity, but instead promotes the preferred visions of the camera operator, revealing some of his or her personality traits and biases.

Within *Capturing the Friedmans*, home video reflects how David Friedman subjectively represents his family and struggles to resolve his inner turmoil. Around the time of his father's and brother's arrest, David bought a video camera and began to document his family's disintegration in the wake of the accusations, recording uncomfortably intimate and confrontational scenes in the home. As Marsha and Devin Orgeron claim,

> David's video acts effectively disturb the various parts of the familial unit, factionalizing the group and, perhaps as a consequence, the audience as well . . . Aggressive, confrontational, and propagandistic at the microscopic level, David's videography teases out familial chaos in search of an affirmation of his own beliefs. (53)

In much of the home video, David portrays his mother as a disloyal traitor for not affirming her husband's innocence. In one notable scene, David sets up his camera from an over-the-shoulder angle and documents a family dinner in which David and Jesse argue with their mother, while their father sits passively and weakly attempts to calm his clan. Elaine is presented as an overdramatic martyr, crying, "Why don't you try once to be supportive of me?" The boys wryly try to explain themselves, but Elaine persistently interrupts. In another home video, David argues that the police erred in the situation with Jesse and Arnold and blames his mother, declaring, "She's brainwashing [Arnold] into thinking it's [his] fault and it's not [his] fault." Through the video camera, David blames others for the accusations and further idealizes his father. In addition, David detaches himself from the horrific situation by altering his role from son to director, allowing him to impose his own theories through visual proof. Simultaneously, though, David instigates and preserves the troublesome memories by recording them, illustrating his conflicted coping strategy in the midst of the scandal. On the way to his younger brother's court date, David asks from behind the camera, "You never touched a kid?" Jesse denies it, saying what David wants to hear. In response, David mutters satisfactorily, "Good," convincing himself of his brother's innocence through the camera.

Although David's dualistic role in the home video—acting as both subject and director—usually entails representing others, he becomes deeply vulnerable and undisguised in his bedroom video testimonials. Early in *Capturing the Friedmans*, David sets a video camera on top of his dresser and records himself. He waves to the camera as if greeting an audience, but claims that the footage is "private" and is between "me now and me of the future." David's expectation of an audience contradicts his declaration of privacy and makes his testimonial seem like direct address rather than self-address. Additionally, Jarecki needed David's consent to include this footage, further illustrating David's disingenuousness (Orgeron 52). Yet, in this light, his bedroom testimonials become a form of therapy for David, a way for him to divulge his anxieties to an unbiased listener. The camera provides him with the space for secure catharsis and seemingly empowers David by giving him complete control over his representation in these testimonials. Like much of his family, David is incredibly dramatic and cares about others' acceptance and understanding above all else, and

seems to know that he will be humanized to future viewers through these video diaries. David cries in front of the camera and describes being "so scared," inviting future viewers' sympathies, but also adds, "my mother could go to fucking hell." Thus, while not entirely sympathetic, David is humanized through his bedroom testimonials as a vulnerable victim of the scandal.

Further complicating the picture of the Friedmans is Jarecki's use of interviews, which have traditionally allowed subjects to feel some control over their representation. According to Bill Nichols, the string-of-interviews approach arose as "a strategic response to the recognition that neither can events speak for themselves nor can a single voice speak with ultimate authority." Unlike earlier forms of documentary, including voice-of-God propaganda and cinéma vérité, "[i]nterviews diffuse authority," in that they distribute power among various perspectives and let viewers come to their own conclusions of the ultimate truth (Pryluck 265). In addition, interviews give subjects the opportunity to speak about a past event, usually long after the event occurred. With this time, subjects can reflect on how they want to appear to audiences, a factor one must consider when weighing subjects' testimonials.

Unlike the home videos manipulated by David Friedman's biased agenda, interviews in *Capturing the Friedmans* offer a more balanced view of the subjects, as they are conducted over time, giving various historical perspectives of the events. While in home videos Elaine is depicted as an irritating self-victimizer, in interviews she comes across as a mother alienated by her male-dominated family merely attempting to find the truth behind the accusations. Though some viewers still perceive her as a nag in interviews and she remains a polarizing presence within the film, Elaine is at least humanized through interviews. Alex Gerbaz describes this process of humanization through interviews as a potential "ethical experience" (19) in which viewers come to "respect the conscious life of others" (26). Interviews force viewers to confront the humanity before them and call for an understanding of the subject's depth, if not empathy for the subject's experiences. As her sons blame her for not supporting their father, Elaine claims to understand their experience, explaining that her sons' "visions [of their father were] distorted" in this confusing situation and that she had experienced similar emotions as a child when her parents divorced.

Whereas Elaine appears magnanimous in her interviews, David further pushes his single-minded belief in his, pronouncing, "I never felt angry with my dad. My dad had nothing to do with this." Meanwhile, interviews allow Jesse to contest his lawyer's claim that Jesse admitted that his father molested him. To the Friedmans, interviews give them some control over how audiences see them, offering them a sense of justice, even if the viewers do not ultimately believe their version of the story. In this way, although interviews may inspire uncertainty, they allow subjects to demonstrate their humanity and depth to audiences.

Yet it was Jarecki who was ultimately in control of the subjects' representation, inspiring charges of "exploitation" like Turan's. To remedy ethical questions and ensure no manipulation occurs during a documentary's production, Calvin Pryluck asserts that the filmmaking should be "collaborative" between the filmmaker and subjects (26). *Capturing the Friedmans*, however, was not collaborative, since the Friedmans were not consulted during the editing process. Jarecki organized their story subjectively, even as many critics deemed the resulting film impartial. Interviews gave the Friedmans the opportunity to represent themselves in a positive light, but the complexity of the documentary as a whole, with its agenda-driven home video, television news footage, and interviews of outside perspectives limited their power in favor of an open-ended story (the tagline for the film—"Who do you believe?"—promoted this inconclusiveness). While the Friedmans felt they were collaborating on the film and as much as they appreciated sharing their individual perspectives, Jarecki ultimately assumed the majority of the responsibility for how the Friedmans were represented.

With this responsibility in Jarecki's hands, we must then question whether the Friedmans' consent was ethically granted, considering how unstable they were and how the documentary affected their lives. Prior to the making of *Capturing the Friedmans*, public perception of the family was tarnished by the media's initial portrayal of the scandal. Arnold and Jesse were pigeonholed as child molesters, while the rest of the family was forever associated with the scandal. Thus, when Jarecki demonstrated significant interest in telling the family's story, the Friedmans believed they had a chance to change the way the rest of the world looked at them. Their belief that they could control public perception must have been an

appealing reason to consent to participate. However, Pryluck argues that "consent is stacked in the filmmaker's favor", as the camera's presence is "subtly coercive" (22). These ideas of control and the camera's intimidation, coupled with the Friedmans' already performative roots (Arnold was a pianist, while David is a birthday clown) and familial self-obsession, made acquiring consent relatively easy. Once consent had been obtained, David Friedman recognized how the documentary could inevitably change his life when he said, "Just the intimation of something like that [being a part of a family accused of molestation] can ruin someone's career." Middle brother Seth probably recognized the film's potential effects, since he excused himself from being interviewed in the film at all. Despite David's awareness of how the film would affect his life, he still allowed Jarecki to publicize his family's story. In Kenneth Turan's eyes, Jarecki was unethical for exploiting such a dysfunctional family, even if they gave him consent. Therefore, the grounds on which Jarecki obtained consent are a bit morally questionable and seem to validate Turan's claim that the Friedmans were manipulated.

In spite of these ethical considerations, *Capturing the Friedmans* still offered the Friedmans an opportunity to represent themselves and humanized the family, even if public perception wasn't necessarily drastically changed. Despite their limited control in telling their story, the Friedmans still manage to express a more complex understanding of their ordeal and how it affected each family member. Turan was probably correct to claim the family was taken advantage of, but he failed to recognize how important it was for them to share their story and demonstrate their humanity to the general public. Subjects like the Friedmans deserve the audience's awareness of the complexity of representation in documentaries. Ultimately, only by recognizing the layers of representation in documentaries can audiences formulate a fair and complete understanding of the situation and people projected on the screen.

Works Cited

Capturing the Friedmans. Dir. Andrew Jarecki. Magnolia Pictures, 2003. DVD.

Gerbaz, Alex. "Direct Address, Ethical Imagination, and Errol Morris's Interrotron." *Film-Philosophy* 12.2 (September 2008): 17–29. Web. 21 Oct. 2011.

Nichols, Bill. "The Voice of Documentary." *Movies and Methods II*. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985. 260–66. Print.

Orgeron, Marsha and Devin Orgeron. "Familial Pursuits, Editorial Acts: Documentaries after the Age of Home Video." *The Velvet Light Trap*, Number 60 (2007): 47–53. *Project Muse*. Web. 30 Nov. 2011.

Pryluck, Calvin. "Ultimately We Are All Outsiders: The Ethics of Documentary Filming." *Journal of the University Film Association* 28.1 (Winter 1976): 21–29. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 Oct. 2011.

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. 1977. New York: Anchor, 1990. 8–17. Print.

Turan, Kenneth. "Cameras on, judgments off" *LATimes.com. Los Angeles Times*, 13 June 2003: n.pag. Web. 13 Aug. 2012.

BENJAMIN EISEN is from Portland, Oregon and is majoring in Film & TV. He's a member of the BU Treblemakers here and will be interning with Regan Communications in the fall. He also enjoys making humorous rap videos, playing guitar, and running. This essay was written for Marisa Milanese's course, WR 100: Documentary Film: History, Theory, and Form.

From the Instructor

In their second essay, WR 100 students revisit how Upton Sinclair's 1905 novel *The Jungle* prompted a presidentially-directed investigation that confirmed his findings of immigrant exploitation in "Packingtown." A century later, undercover documentaries of the modern meatpacking industry suggest that little has changed, though industry representatives counter that such employment constitutes economic opportunity for immigrant workers.

Students tested the industry's assertion, drawing on competing government and industry statistics of worker injury. One fall day Sameer appeared in class having graphically plotted both sets of numbers to demonstrate the unreliability of industry-backed risk rates and a misleading representation of worker wellbeing. This essay represents his effort to enter the public "conversation" and to argue for change.

— Melanie Smith

From the Writer

Most of my essays arise from my own opinions and are then shaped and supported by evidence. This essay, however, was different.

On this particular day, our WR 100 class had just finished our first papers of the year, having submitted them the previous class. To begin the work on our next essay and to introduce the idea of counter-argument, Ms. Smith had the class look at data from the American Meat Institute (AMI). But as I digested the numbers and began to form my stance, I realized that they were incomplete—subtly biased to tell a certain story. As someone who loves math, Microsoft Excel, and complete stories, I knew that there was really only one solution.

Ten minutes later, I was the only one with no counter-argument written. But I was also the only one who had a spreadsheet filling in the holes of the AMI's story while simultaneously laying out my own narrative. As it turns out, much more than a lone spreadsheet is required to write a great essay. Namely, it involves actually writing a counter-argument, discarding about two-thirds of my first draft, and committing hours and hours of time.

But in the end, that spreadsheet did become my story: a story that is told in my paper "Exploitation in the 21st Century: Illegal Immigrants in the Meatpacking Industry."

— Sameer Farooq

Sameer Farooq

Exploitation in the 21st Century: Illegal Immigrants in the Meatpacking Industry

American folklore is full of inspirational, so-called "rags to riches" stories, chronicling the rise of immigrants against all odds. Although immigrants faced many challenges at the turn of the twentieth century, grueling working conditions largely defined their stories and often led to tragic consequences. Nowhere were these challenges more prevalent than in the meatpacking industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was characterized by its willing immigrant workforce and its exploitative work environment. One hundred years later, most citizens are both shocked by these horrendous conditions and pleased with the apparent improvement in industry practices over time. Yet, growing evidence suggests that either public ignorance or the sanctioning of low safety standards is behind this belief in the current safety of the meatpacking industry. Put differently, in expecting extremely low-priced food without considering its origins, citizens implicitly condone the practices of factory farms, some of the largest and most dangerous corporations in America. In addition to overlooking flagrant animal abuse, citizens disregard the chronic mistreatment of workers, particularly illegal immigrants Incredibly, the industry's defenders, including one anonymous writer at *The Economist*, have suggested that the benefits of higher wages and more opportunity in America outweigh the risks of menial jobs in the meatpacking industry ("Of meat" 1–2). But for each successful immigrant, there are many others who do not escape unscathed. By glossing over on-the-job dangers and the rampant exploitation of meatpacking workers, these defenders of the industry *explicitly* condone the actions of the meatpacking industry and, in some ways, encourage them. In

fact, the risks, exploitation, and overall abysmal working conditions in meatpacking plants far outweigh the benefits of the job for all workers, particularly for illegal immigrants.

Leaders of the industry would attack this claim at its root, arguing that safety for meatpacking workers is a high priority, in stark contrast to the dangerous and poor working conditions of meatpacking plants as described by government investigators Charles P. Neill and James B. Reynolds in 1906. Their seminal report revealed that the great majority of meatpacking plants were dimly lit, poorly ventilated, and extraordinarily unsanitary (4–5). By contrast, current statistics released by the American Meat Institute (AMI) show that common measures of illness and injury, such as "Total Recordable Cases of Injury per 100 Full-Time Workers" and "Total Lost Work Days per 100 Full-Time Workers," have declined (2). In addition, the incidence of injuries and illnesses is the lowest since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began recording this data in 1970 (AMI 1). However, the AMI has presented this data in a calculated attempt to avoid the real issue of current worker safety. No reasonable person would argue that the meatpacking industry has not become *safer* over time. However, he *would* argue that despite becoming safer, it is still nowhere near safe enough. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the food manufacturing industry as a whole reported 6.2 work-related injuries per 100 full-time workers, higher than the manufacturing sector rate of 5.0 cases and much higher than the overall private industry rate of 3.9 ("Injuries" 1). Furthermore, the meatpacking industry (referred to as "Animal slaughtering and processing") has a rate of 7.5 cases per 100 full-time workers ("Injuries" 2). While this may not seem that much higher than the other averages, it is about 21 percent higher than the food manufacturing industry as a whole and a whopping 50 percent higher than the manufacturing industry as a whole.

A number of other statistics also show the injury and illness rate in the meatpacking industry to be higher than any other food-manufacturing sector. While the meatpacking industry, specifically the AMI, prefers to focus on the decrease in injuries and illnesses, it does not account for the much higher rate overall. Although highly misleading, this bait-and-switch of statistics is far from unexpected. The continued existence of the AMI depends on the prosperity of the meatpacking industry as a whole, so

it is logical that it would avoid the real question by focusing on largely irrelevant numbers.

However, rather than deny on-the-job risks, most of the industry's defenders simply minimize those risks by pointing out apparent benefits of the work. The aforementioned anonymous writer at *The Economist* employs this tactic in a 2006 article, "Of meat, Mexicans, and social mobility; Immigration and 'The Jungle.'" The author quickly establishes the article's legitimacy by referencing Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* within the first sentence. The writer points out that although capitalism is no longer in question as Upton Sinclair believed, people are still concerned with the questions, "Can immigrants still work their way up from the bottom? Can they become American?" (1). The article tells the story of one illegal immigrant, Alberto Queiroz, who was paid the ludicrous hourly wage of $2.50 while working in a Los Angeles clothes factory. After moving to some better-paying but short-term jobs, he eventually ended up at a Smithfield Foods plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina. According to Queiroz, although the work was hard, fast, and extremely repetitive (and admittedly, sometimes dangerous), it enabled him to earn wages of more than $10 per hour. Just as they did a century earlier, these immigrant success stories justify perilous working conditions as a stepping-stone to the American dream. But by focusing on one person, the argument falls short. For each tale of an immigrant who does "work [his] way up from the bottom," there are many more who are irreparably injured on the job, their futures permanently handicapped.

But, the author then makes the point that "Taxi-drivers are 34 times more likely to die on the job than meatpackers" ("Of meat" 1). Indeed, the author believes that he proves his point by showing that the seemingly dangerous job of meatpacking is actually much safer than taxi driving. However, this trite rhetorical strategy actually serves to reduce the effectiveness of the author's argument. Any number of similar comparisons can be made between two completely different areas, and like this comparison, they are all equally meaningless. The risks of a taxi driver are largely unavoidable because they are simply risks that all drivers face. Conversely, the risks in the meatpacking industry result from the incessant focus on maximizing profits, even at a detriment to worker safety. To put it

concisely, one set of risks is impossible to control; the other set is simply deemed unimportant.

Moreover, the author simply mentions risk and injury as possibilities, not seriously considering those workers who either died (without life insurance) or were so seriously injured that their ability to work was impaired. As Christopher D. Cook points out in "Sliced and Diced," almost none of the immigrant workers have health insurance because the cost is too high (233). That means their injuries often go untreated and are easily re-aggravated. For injured workers, not only does their quality of life greatly suffer, but also as hourly workers, the opportunity cost of injury is immense. First, there is the initial time away from work due to injury, which is a median of nine days for musculoskeletal disorders ("Injuries" 2), and then any re-aggravation of the injury means even more days away from work. Each day away from work could mean a loss of over $100, which will have a huge impact on the workers' livelihood. Beyond that loss, they risk being replaced and losing their jobs altogether. According to Cook, this turnover rate reaches 200 percent in some plants (234).

In addition, Cook scrutinizes the claim that relatively high wages act as a reward for tackling the dangers of the meatpacking industry. He also points out that the lack of unionization in the industry means that immigrant workers are paid relatively very little—about $6 to $9—although it may seem like a high wage to them (234–235). Furthermore, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1998 dollars, meat packing workers' hourly wages have actually *declined* by $5.74 since 1981 (Cook 235).

Yet, *The Economist* fails to mention these actual facts about meat packers' hourly wages, instead opting to use the single example of Alberto Queiroz. Indeed, seemingly relevant statistics only appear once in *The Economist* article, during a discussion of the American dream:

> Mexicans have grown much richer by coming to the United States…And their children are doing even better. Whereas only 40% of first-generation Mexican immigrants between the ages of 16 and 20 are in school or college, nearly two-thirds of the second

> generation are. Between the ages of 21 and 25 the leap is even more striking, from 7.3% to 24.4%." (2)

While these statistics may be true, the author utilizes the misleading techniques of the AMI. By discussing an anecdote of a meatpacking worker earlier, the author implies that these statistics of future success apply to immigrant meatpackers. While a portion of the statistics may have some relevance, this use of broader statistics instead of focusing on meatpacking Mexicans is blatantly dishonest. And like most of the arguments in "Of meat, Mexicans, and social mobility," this claim about the American dream also falls flat.

Yet, it is all too easy to believe the reassuring arguments presented in *The Economist* and the worker safety information from the AMI. Citizens have also become complacent because of the obvious improvements in industry safety over time. Taken all together, the meatpacking industry seems at least reasonably safe, and certainly safe enough so that the benefits of work outweigh the risks for immigrant workers. But the true story is one of statistical manipulation and the use of carefully selected anecdotes to gloss over major problems still present in the meatpacking industry. To remain a country with a high capacity for social mobility and self-advancement, America must radically reform the meatpacking industry. And until a safe working environment is truly achieved, the only opportunity that America offers illegal immigrants is the opportunity to be exploited.

Works Cited

"AMI Fact Sheet: Worker Safety in the Meat and Poultry Industries." American Meat Institute, Web. November 2010. <http://www.meatami.com/>. 16 October 2011. 1–4.

Cook, Christopher D. "Sliced and Diced." *The CAFO Reader: The Tragedy of Industrial Animal Factories.* Ed. Daniel Imhoff. Los Angles: Foundation for Deep Ecology, 2010. 232–239.

"Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities in Food Manufacturing, 2008." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Web. 21 January 2011. <http://www.bls.gov/>. 16 October 2011. 1–8.

"Of meat, Mexicans, and social mobility; Immigration and 'The Jungle.'" *The Economist*. Web. [US] 17 June 2006: 32US. Academic OneFile. Web. 3 Aug. 2010. 1–2.

Reynolds, James B. and Charles P. Neill. "Conditions in Chicago Stockyards." 59th Congress 1st Session – House of Representatives. 2 June 1906: 1–11.

SAMEER FAROOQ, a member of BU's Seven-Year Liberal Arts/Medical Education Program, is double majoring in medical science and mathematics. He is an avid reader and greatly enjoys writing in his free time. This past year, Sameer discovered his passion for stand-up comedy and currently performs original routines at BU Central's monthly Open Mic Nights. This essay was written for Melanie Smith's course, WR 100: Topics in the History of Public Health.

From the Instructor

Our final paper for WR 150: Modern and Contemporary American Poetry builds upon the analytical, argumentative, and research skills introduced in the first two papers. In order to enlarge the scope and complexity of their arguments, students are asked to conduct a more substantial exploration of multiple poems by any poet of their choosing, or a longer poem such as Whitman's Leaves of Grass. Similar to Papers 1 and 2 students must find their motivation for writing in the arguments of others; however, this time students are not provided any exhibit or argument sources for their consideration. Paper 3 required students to locate and engage with all source material independently. Beyond this the paper has to be 2500-3000 words in length and use at least five sources (two of which had to be argument sources). Better papers will feature a compelling and researched prelude, a multi-source stasis, exemplary usage of poetic terminology, and a purposeful usage of background and theory sources.

George Danis's final essay "The World of Eliot's Waste Land" is an incredibly sophisticated and ambitious argument about perhaps the most difficult and complex American poem ever written. What is most remarkable about George's essay is his engagement with long-standing literary critics such as Cleanth Brooks and D. C. Fowler; his usage of a variety of source material; and his poetic analysis, the breadth and depth of which any scholar of T. S. Eliot's work would find persuasive and illuminating.

— Jason Tandon

From the Writer

Prior to Professor Tandon's "Modern and Contemporary Poetry" class, I had never seriously read or written about poetry. Rather, like most of my classmates, the bulk of my exposure to poetry came in high school with a teacher spending at most around three weeks reading Shakespeare and requiring an iambic pentameter assignment at the end of the term.

In WR 150, however, I quickly came to appreciate and even enjoy the level of scholarship necessary to understand a poem. From group discussions and class lessons, I learned that poetic choices—such as allusion, form, or even rhythm and meter—that at first glance might seem arbitrary can hold a much deeper level of significance when interpreted within a particular historical or social context. Instead of reading a poem and searching blindly for blunt instances of alliteration or peculiar word spacing, I started to become a more perceptive reader, keenly reading for unique subtleties in the poem; like the critics whose work I researched for motivation, I wanted to develop the necessary sophistication to intuit a unique interpretation that I could call my own.

This was certainly not easy to do for T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," because parsing the poem's numerous literary, historical, linguistic, and mythological references often proved excessively challenging. To simplify the poem, I focused my energy on deciphering the significance of Eliot's unique proclivity for irony evident throughout the poem. Indeed, from the opening epigraph (a Roman oracle responding to questions posed to her in Greek) to the poem's closing stanzas (the titular Thunder does not speak) it's clear that the waste land's fertility is not intended to be restored.

Consequently, while some critics claim that Eliot's choice of a barren "waste land" as the poem's setting in conjunction with the poem's litany of spiritual references epitomizes a morally lost and spiritually arid post-WWI Europe, and as such serves as Eliot's call for spiritual revival, I argue that the poem's clearly purposeful irony instead speaks to the failures of religious and Christian thinking in Europe. Moreover, Eliot is drawing the reader's attention to the clear incompatibility of past religious thinking with the modern present through paradox and contradiction, offering an alternative morality that is neither bound by allegiance to a particular god nor rewarded by good faith. Rather, his world is "beyond good and evil" in the sense that it is a raw waste land, barren of past morality and thus subject to the will of the individual. In this sense, his work is uniquely empowering; unlike Eliot's eponymous J. Alfred Prufrock, who fails to seize the day, "The Waste Land" champions individual potential.

— George Danis

George Danis

Prize Essay Winner

The World of Eliot's Waste Land

In his 1923 essay "*Ulysses,* Order and Myth," T. S. Eliot predicated that rather than the narrative style of poetry popularized by poets of the Romantic era, poets of the twentieth-century would instead employ James Joyce's "mythical method," a technique characteristic of heavy mythological, historical, and literary allusions used to create a "continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" (177). Doing so allowed a poem to reach a new universal level of significance regardless of era, much like that of the mythic heroes of Greece and Medieval Europe. More importantly, Eliot noted that making use of the mythical method allowed art to be possible in the epistemologically unstable modern world. Indeed, with the development of modernism came dramatic shifts in the aesthetic paradigm for both visual and literary artists; similar to the new aesthetic schools of cubism, futurism, and surrealism inspired by redefinitions of time and space by scientists and philosophers of the twentieth-century, Eliot argued that the mythical method provided poets with a technique to reconcile present ideas with older linear conceptions of narrative poetry. Specifically, according to Eliot, the poet gained a perspective that offered a new way of "controlling, of giving a shape and significance to the panorama of anarchy which is contemporary history" (178).

Many critics, such as Jay Martin, have argued that Eliot's modernist poem "The Waste Land" correspondingly seeks to order the chaotic modern world; in particular with its substantial use of historical and literal references, the mythical method offers Eliot a satirical lens to perceive and give new meaning to the present (65). Critics have also argued, however, that the poem's repeated allusions to fertility myth represent Eliot's call for

religious revival in Europe. Notably, D. C. Fowler contends that the poem's ending represents "restoration" of the Fisher King's waste land; to him, the Indian words given at the end of the poem provide the "abracadabra element . . . just as the hero of the Grail romances was expected to speak the proper words before the wounded king and his land could be restored, so [does] the protagonist in 'The Waste Land' provide an incantation" (36). The negativism of the opening lines is therefore supplanted by the poem's closing line.

However, reading "What the Thunder Said" as Eliot's resolution to the problems dramatized earlier in the poem disregards the irony of the poem's last movement. Namely, the thunder *does not* speak and the Christian myths alluded to throughout the poem are not fulfilled—the waste land instead remains barren and spiritually arid as the Sanskrit lines in place of Christian prayer at the end of the poem more importantly represent a recapitulation of the poem's opening multilingual epigraph than a signal of conclusion. If "The Waste Land" represents Eliot's attempt to transcend the limitations of traditional poetic technique (linear narration) and instead write with the dominating twentieth-century ideas of relativity, randomness, and uncertainty in mind, perhaps his intent is to depict a world not only barren of traditional epistemology but also of Christian morality and religious certainty. With this interpretation in mind, Eliot's world consequently offers an alternative morality that is neither bound by allegiance to a particular god nor rewarded by good faith; in this sense, the waste land is a world beyond good and evil.

The allusion to the Roman oracle Sibyl in the opening of "The Waste Land" demonstrates Eliot's proclivity throughout the poem for irony, contradiction, and paradox. By depicting Sibyl as hanging in a jar and "wishing to die," Eliot is directly drawing attention to the limitations of the oracle's physical perception; ironically, she seems not to have been able to foretell her own fate as she is now physically trapped and subject to the same chaotic world as those who come and ask her for foresight and guidance. Although the decision to include a bilingual epigraph to begin the poem might seem unnecessarily academic, Eliot's choice is clearly meticulous when considering the technique used throughout "The Burial of the Dead." Much like the Roman oracle responding in Greek to questions posed in Latin, the poem's first movement is written with a motive

to unify ostensibly incompatible worlds: those of past, present and future. The result is a disregard for time and a particular emphasis on *place;* each line represents a different event as Eliot arbitrarily manipulates mythic and historical references. April, rather than being a month associated with birth and rejuvenation, is instead cast as "the cruelest month," an inversion of the original opening lines of *The Canterbury Tales;* the romantic image of lilacs in the spring is similarly juxtaposed with barren "dull roots" unable to grow out of "stony rubbish" (1–4; 19–20). Yet amidst the first movement's cluttered "heap of broken images" and seeming lack of sensible direction, there are brief moments of resolve and return to linear narration. Marie's sled ride, for example, offers a pause from Eliot's heavy use of direct allusion and historical reference at the poem's onset. Furthermore, it also marks Eliot's first use of a single tense for more than one line. While the poem begins in the present—"April *is* the cruelest month"—Eliot's description of the "winter [that] kept us warm" and Marie's memory is told entirely in the past (5).

In the first movement's last stanza, however, the poem's mythical and historical allusions compete simultaneously with the poem's brief moments of narration. While the "Unreal city" is specifically identified as London, the passage contains allusions and direct references to Dante's *Inferno* (60). Likewise, Stetson and the speaker are veterans both of Jutland (the famous naval battle of World War I as indicated in the footnotes) and Mylae, as referenced in the same line. Much like the phenomenon of "double exposure" in photography where two or more individual exposures are superimposed to create a single photograph, the effect is the kaleidoscopic blur of two worlds, articulated in defiance of traditional poetic boundaries of unified time and place. Although the effect does not produce immediate coherency, it does illustrate the importance of the reader's perspective in relation to characters in the poem, a theme Eliot reiterates throughout the poem. Rather, the characters in the poem neither interact with one another nor understand their placing in the poem; much like Eliot's call for the reader to transcend the poetic limitations of time and place, so too does understanding the poem's integration of past, present, and future require a perspective not limited to the characters in the poem. Understanding "The Waste Land" consequently necessitates a nonlinear conceptualization of

time, an ability to simultaneously parse the meaning of seemingly disordered historical and literary allusions. [1]

In the poem's second movement, "A Game of Chess," Eliot furthers this challenge to conventional poetic technique and thinking by creating the "cubistic woman," a collage of references to *objects* rather than an explicit description of one particular *subject*.[2] Specifically, while Eliot makes detailed references to the room and its contents, he dismisses anything uniquely characteristic to the woman. Consider the following fragment taken from the opening passage:

> Reflecting light upon the table as
>
> The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
>
> From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
>
> In vials of ivory and coloured glass
>
> Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes
> (80–85).

The woman is consequently unimportant: although surrounded by symbols of significance, and in particular of beauty and sexuality, she signifies nothing as no symbol refers to anything peculiar to herself; that is, she is not sexual, the objects around her are. More subtly, as critics Jewel Brooker and Joseph Bentley carefully note of this particular passage, "nouns . . . things [that] are normally essential [or] thought of as essential, are peripheral and accidental" (103). Rather, Eliot's emphasis on qualities has the effect of misdirecting the reader from the subjects they describe.

More important than Eliot's challenge to traditional poetry are the epistemological implications of Eliot's technique. Specifically, while in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries scientists and philosophers believed that the subject (the observer) and object (the observed entity) were divided and made tangible by the mind, it seems Eliot is instead following in the spirit of the twentieth-century paradigm, juxtaposing the idealization and supposed order of subject-object relations with a modern world of randomness, fragmentation, and relativity, a breakdown of the assumed continuity of observer and observed. Doing so importantly calls into question the woman's existence: if the objects do not refer to or *interpret her* (the role of the subject), she is not *experienced* by the objects in the

room[3]; Eliot's work to keep the woman unidentified and faceless is indeed incontestable when considering that the woman's reflection in the mirror is left unacknowledged. One interpretation of the woman, then, is that her significance is only apparent to those whose perspectives transcend the waste land and who have the ability to interpret her inclusion with Eliot's mythological and historical references (the readers). Indeed, questions concerning the woman's reality persist with the entrance of the unidentified visitor; it seems, moreover, that his indifference towards the woman furthers the argument that Eliot's intent is to confound the reader with questions concerning the significance of the woman to the man. Particularly convincing evidence is provided later in the canto as the conversation between the woman and the man shifts to the memory of her visitor:

> He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
>
> And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
>
> . . .
>
> You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
>
> (And her only thirty-one) (148–151)

Lil, the woman, or "proper fool" about whom the visitor is speaking, is criticized for her apparent lack of sexuality and present inability to give her soldier husband a "good time"; she is further expected to have "[gotten] herself some teeth" with the allowance given to her and "make herself a bit smart" (143–145). Yet unlike Eliot's earlier ghostlike woman, Lil's existence in the poem is clearly noted. Among the facts listed in Eliot's detailed description, Lil is thirty-one years of age, has bad teeth, has borne five children, has misspent her allowance and ruined her health with an abortion, and is married to Albert who is disgusted by her appearance.

Considering that Lil's dialogue is written entirely in the British vernacular, it thus seems that Lil's objectification coupled with Eliot's earlier de-emphasis of the woman in front of the mirror speaks to the crux of the second movement: with Eliot's numerous references to Eve and *Hamlet's* Ophelia in "A Game of Chess," the poet is perhaps offering a critique of gender relations throughout history, of "wasted women" subject to the will of men in myth. Indeed, neither woman embodies any particular sexual power to impose on their respected men—it follows that they are further objects to the hero's subject. Coupled with earlier allusions to fertility myth

and Eliot's acknowledged importance of Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* to the thematic composition of the poem, the importance of women in the second movement becomes strikingly clear and particularly useful for further interpretation when it is realized that the "waste land" is in mythic terms equivalent to the sexually barren woman.[4]

Eliot's extended metaphor of sexual distance between the men and women in "A Game of Chess" and the barrenness of the waste land climaxes in the poem's third movement, "The Fire Sermon." Specifically while early water imagery in the canto seems to foreshadow the inevitability of rain and the restored fertility of the infertile waste land, Eliot's ironic juxtaposition of rain with the dehumanization of sexual intercourse in lines 235–56 instead implies that such rejuvenation is not possible. Rather, if the women of the second canto are to be interpreted as metaphorically representative of the barren waste land, the impossibility of sexual fertility represents perpetuated aridity and the *impossibility of rain*. More specifically, although in lines 215–20 Eliot hints at the man's apparent lust for the woman, the dismissive concluding remarks by the woman of, "Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over," instead imply the absence of lust (252). Moreover, the woman described as, "Hardly aware of her departed lover," illustrates the desensitization and utter indifference toward love making; sexual intercourse, instead of a symbol of rejuvenation, birth and a celebration of life, is made as mechanical as the woman's "automatic hand" (250; 255) and is further made significant when recalling the question of existence posed in the second canto.

Such lack of a human soul in "The Fire Sermon" has led many critics to conclude that much of Eliot's poem satirizes the modern mind and twentieth-century thinking. In particular, Cleanth Brooks has argued that "our contemporary waste land is in large part the result of our scientific attitude—or our complete secularization" (68). And when considering the third canto's clearly Christian prayers to "pluckest me out," Eliot is conceivably calling for an escape from the hellish waste land through divine intervention; this reference is perhaps a signal of Eliot's own disillusionment with the world of paradox, contradiction, irony, and hopelessness that the poem has become, a reference to the importance of religious thinking in the modern world as a basis for existence, ethics, and morality.

Yet when considering that many faiths—such as Buddhism (alluded to throughout "The Fire Sermon" and also the source of the canto's title) and Christianity—consider sexual intercourse and asceticism as rival modes of achieving divine unity,[5] the closing lines of the third canto suggest interpretation markedly different from Brooks' work. Rather, prayers to "pluckest me out" of "Burning burning burning burning" are ironically preceded by dominating images of water throughout the canto; references to the Thames River and "music [that] crept by me upon the waters" are certainly not accidental and importantly evidence Eliot's propensity for irony throughout the poem (257–260). And when additionally considering that the poem's fourth movement, "Death by Water," does not advocate rebirth from death—the protagonist, Phlebas, merely dies without hope for regeneration or resurrection in the poem's symbolically shortest canto—the satirical message of the poem's third movement becomes readily clear. Namely, Phlebas' insignificant death mocks religion promising salvation or reward after death, both characteristics of the Eastern and Western theologies alluded to throughout "The Fire Sermon."

Placing the third and fourth movements of "The Waste Land" in the context of the entire poem, by deconstructing assumed knowledge of good and evil, Eliot is perhaps suggesting the difficulty of existence for humans based on religious dogma. Specifically, while attacking the question of existence epistemologically in "A Game of Chess," it seems that in "The Fire Sermon" and "Death by Water" Eliot is acknowledging that the present problem of existence in the modern world is a consequence of humankind's religious beliefs, a problem not constrained to a particular gender or time period. The fact that the characters in "The Waste Land" have lost knowledge of good and evil (as derived from religious faith), keeps them from being alive—as critic Stephen Spender perceptively remarks, they remain "eternally dead" (46).

This argument is well supported when considering the poem's final movement, "What the Thunder Said." In particular, while visions of rain and water are referenced throughout the canto[6], Eliot recapitulates the poem's earlier feel of pessimism and cynicism with the movement's closing lines. Specifically, although the protagonist is cast in the waste land, sitting upon a shore "with the arid plain behind me," he is soon transported to the Unreal City—noted clearly by Eliot's references to London and Dante—

and then finally to the East, presumably India, without hope for his European waste land as the "flash of lighting . . . Bringing rain," floods the Ganga River. More subtly, this chaotic shift in geography not only exemplifies the poem's earlier disregard for unity of time and place, but mocks any notion of narrative finality (394). Indeed, the Dante reference is not to Dante's *Paradiso,* the last poem in the *Divine Comedy,* but to *Purgatorio;* as noted clearly in the text, the protagonist neither "sets his lands in order" nor ascends to any Christian heaven (426).

By deconstructing the dominating intellectual and cultural paradigms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and in place advocating a world not based on the assumed order of subject-object relations, the certainty of faith, or even a definitive knowledge of one's existence, Eliot is successful in his employment of the mythic method; "The Waste Land" indeed remains omnipresent, or, as personal friend Ezra Pound (also to whom the poem is dedicated) remarked in his review of the poem, "news that stays news" (Raine 96). This significance, however, is somewhat contrived when noting that critics are still unable to agree on a concrete interpretation of the poem. Yet when considering the implications of Eliot's aesthetic technique, breaking down the narrative style of poetry set before him and instead challenging the reader to transcend assumed unity of time and place, Eliot is conceivably articulating a world beyond the constraints of not only literary technique but more importantly morality and ethics as the Fisher King's disillusionment and spiritual exhaustion throughout "The Waste Land" perhaps reflects the limitations of religious faith.

This interpretation has particularly strong resonance with Nietzsche's philosophy as explicated in *Beyond Good and Evil.* Though written roughly fifteen years apart, both "The Waste Land" and Nietzsche's work importantly focus on deconstructing past morality and philosophy, in favor of advocating a world of freedom for the adequately fit individual; for Eliot, this amounts to transcending the limitations of past poetry and instead supposing the new Cubistic and Futuristic modernist world. Nietzsche's analysis similarly accuses past philosophers of blindly accepting Judeo-Christian values, therefore resulting in a false interpretation of morality; Nietzsche, rather, does not consider certain virtues and vices to be *a priori* good or evil but instead unproven values reflective of a particular religious narrative, an assumption that importantly weakens an individual's poten-

tial (200–205). His philosophy hence moves into the realm "beyond good and evil" in the sense of leaving behind traditional morality—he instead calls for his readers to no longer be ashamed of differences in the face of a supposed morality-for-all. Likewise, by deconstructing conventional poetry and supposed morality, Eliot is inviting his readers, those strong enough to leave behind requisite assumptions such as linear time and place, to this world. Recalling the visual movements associated with modernism (that is, futurism, cubism, and surrealism) as a graphical representation of the technique used in "The Waste Land,"[7] this philosophical interpretation is perhaps best captured with Casper David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Mist* (1818). Specifically, Eliot is advocating transcending a chaotic modern world and ordering it as the individual sees fit, neither being constrained by traditional philosophy and science nor subscribing to a particular moral narrative. Unlike Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, who fails to seize the day, "The Waste Land" champions individual potential. In this sense, the poem achieves universal significance, a testament indeed to the legacy of Eliot's mythical method.

Notes

1. Indeed, as will be shown, the poem's opening epigraph cannot be understood without first reading the ending.

2. Futurism and Surrealism: as critic Jacob Korg writes on Eliot's technique, "The Surrealist effect is like that of an image remembered from a dream; it embodies a profound emotional impression, but its meaning remains elusive." The most important motifs of Surrealist art are paradox and contradiction. Futurist artists sought to depict speed rather than stagnancy in their works and this is reflected throughout much of the nonlinearity and arbitrary use of tense in "The Waste Land" (89–91).

3. An illustrating example of this paradox can be seen in mathematics. In Principia Mathematica, Newton acknowledged that mathematics rested on the manifestation of objects by the subject; numbers could only be identified with a relation, a means to make an abstraction tangible. Consequently, without a subject to interpret significance, and define with a relation, an object has no meaning; two objects correspondingly have no reality in themselves. One possible interpretation of the title, then, is that it symbolizes such epistemological stalemate and inability to reconcile present theory with traditional theories of knowledge and knowing (Brooker and Bentley 64).

4. Examples of fertility myth and the barrenness of the waste land early in the poem: "breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land" and "that corpse you planted last year in your garden…will it bloom this year?" (2; 72)

5. A major motivation for asceticism is the brevity of sexual intercourse. Rather, ascetics maintain that a more permanent relationship with God is achieved through traditional prayer, humility, and sacrifice (Brooker and Bentley 124).

6. As in the third movement, rain may be interpreted as a symbol of restoration and rejuvenation.

7. Consider Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 as a "heap of broken images."

Works Cited

Bentley, Joseph and Jewel Brooker. *Reading "The Waste Land": Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990. Print.

Brooks, Cleanth. "The Waste Land: Critique of Myth." *A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land."* Ed. Jay Martin. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968. 59–87. Print.

Duchamp, Marcel. *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. 1912. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Web. 24 Apr. 2012. <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51448.html?mulR=25794|1>.

Eliot, T. S. *"Ulysses,* Order and Myth." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. New York: Farror, Straus, Giroux, 1945. 177–179.

---. "The Waste Land." *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*. Ed. Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellman, Robert O'Clair. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003. Print.

Fowler, D.C. "What the Thunder Said." *A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land."* Ed. Jay Martin. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968. 34–36. Print.

Friedrich, Casper David. *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (Wanderer above the Mist). 1818. Kunsthalle Hamburg. Web. 24 Apr. 2012. <http://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/index.php/19th_Century.html>.

Korg, Jacob. "Modern Art Techniques in 'The Waste Land.'" Ed. Jay Martin. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968. 89–96. Print.

Martin, Jay. "T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land.'" *A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land."* Ed. Jay Martin. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968. Print.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Print.

Raine, Craig. *T. S. Eliot*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.

Spender, Stephen. "The Fire Sermon." *A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land."* Ed. Jay Martin. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968. 46–48. Print.

GEORGE DANIS is a mathematics and history double major in the Class of 2013. On campus, he is a Resident Assistant at Sleeper Hall and a mathematics tutor at the Educational Resource Center. He would like to especially thank Professor Jason Tandon for his encouragement throughout WR 150. This essay was written for Jason Tandon's course, WR 150: Modern and Contemporary American Poetry.

From the Instructor

In WR 150 we explore the history of human subject protection in health research, beginning with the infamous Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis. The revelation of this 40-year non-therapeutic study of 400 African American sharecroppers prompted a critically needed overhaul of federal guidelines for health research. These reforms, however, do not extend to health studies conducted outside the United States, prompting some bioethicists to charge that clinical trials undertaken in developing countries, where there is poor or absent medical care, constitute the new "Tuskegee." Kim Clark tackles these assertions by positioning the Tuskegee study as the reference point for an examination of such research, refuting the charge of exploitation and, further, identifying research benefits.

— Melanie Clark

From the Writer

I began researching my paper "Clinical Trials in Developing Countries: The New 'Tuskegee?'" with the mindset that my thesis would be an affirmative answer to the question. However, I discovered that, despite my personal opinion, sources were pushing me in the opposite direction. Although I usually do not write a paper with a thesis that I do not agree with, I saw this paper as an opportunity to strengthen my persuasive writing skills. Because I was skeptical, I noticed flaws in my argument that I might not have anticipated if I had been already convinced of my viewpoint. As a result, my paper has the most convincing argument that I have ever written.

— Kimberly Clark

Kimberly Clark

Clinical Trials in Developing Countries: The New "Tuskegee"?

Imagine the suffering that a West African HIV-positive pregnant woman endures as she grapples with the heartbreaking possibility that she might pass the HIV virus to her unborn child. Her situation appears hopeless; she lives in a developing country where the rates of HIV are high and the quality of medical care is low. Now imagine that researchers from the United States tell her that they have a drug, called zidovudine, which could protect her baby from HIV. When asked if she would give her consent to participate in a placebo-controlled clinical trial testing the efficacy of the drug, what will she decide? For Nicole, living in the Ivory Coast, pregnant and HIV-positive, her choice was simple: "As long as there was a possibility to save my daughter, I had to try" (qtd. in French). Nicole was not alone in her decision; she was one of thousands of women, all desperately trying to save the lives of their unborn children, who participated in placebo-controlled trials testing zidovudine held throughout developing countries. However, controversy soon swirled around the trials. Outraged by the chance that the study participants received a placebo rather than the drug that was proven effective in earlier trials (Sperling 1621–1622), many people claim that the women were being exploited. One of such critics, Marcia Angell, as the executive editor of the *New England Journal of Public Health*, claims that the trials demonstrated that research "[has] not come very far from Tuskegee" (849). Indeed, the possibility that a woman like Nicole received a placebo in lieu of the drug with proven potential to save the health of her child evokes the ordeals of the syphilitic African American men from whom treatment was purposefully withheld during the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis

(TSUS). Why then, were the trials allowed to continue if they were indeed exploitative? The type of exploitation found in the HIV trials was considered non-harmful since it involved researchers rather than doctors and considerable benefits to the study population. Therefore, despite their similarities, the HIV placebo-controlled trials were justified while the TSUS was not.

A direct comparison of the TSUS and the trials in question is legitimate to a point. Both were research studies that involved a vulnerable population afflicted with a life-threatening disease, an adherence to the local standard of care, and the intention to withhold treatment despite its proven efficacy. For the TSUS, the vulnerable population was poor African American men; the disease was syphilis; the justification for withholding the treatment was that the men were never going to receive medical care anyway (Brandt 18). Despite living seemingly worlds away, the HIV-positive women participants of the placebo-controlled trials shared quite a bit with the men of Tuskegee. They were seriously sick, living in an economically disadvantaged country where living with health care was the exception and living without it was the norm. The fifty percent chance that they received a placebo and would continue to live without the drug that could save the health of their children results from the fact that the local standard of care in developing countries offers no treatment (World Health Organization). Both situations involved a study population in deplorable conditions and authoritative study leaders with the ability to take advantage of such conditions; the TSUS involved white doctors and poor black men and the placebo-controlled trials involved U.S. researchers and women of developing countries. In light of these similarities, the main connection between the TSUS and the HIV placebo-controlled trials can be determined as exploitation. However, exploitation remains both the common thread and the dividing factor of the TSUS and the HIV placebo-controlled trials.

Such a division occurs because, although both the TSUS and the HIV placebo-controlled trials involved exploitation, ethicists consider a certain type of exploitation to be ethical. While the common definition of exploitation pertains to the concept of the first person taking an unfair advantage of the second person so that the first person benefits, Jennifer S. Hawkins, an ethicist and associate research professor at Duke

University, elaborates on that definition by explaining that exploitative actions are characterized by "*procedural* and *outcome* unfairness" (Hawkins 251). Procedural unfairness deals with the way in which an incident commenced, occurring when, for example, a research study gains participants through questionable means such as deception, coercion or uninformed consent (Hawkins 251). Outcome unfairness quite understandably deals with an unjust result of a study which occurred due to "*harmful* . . . [or] . . . *nonharmful* (though still unfair) transactions" (Hawkins 251).

Hawkins defines harm as an instance in which the outcome of the study "lowers [the participants'] significant interests or sets them back relative to where they would have been otherwise" (Hawkins 253). However, Hawkins notes that "there is controversy over whether this is the only baseline that counts" as "[s]ometimes *omissions* seem like harms" (254). Some people consider that allowing a person to suffer from a disease simply because it is a common occurrence, or baseline, where they live constitutes harm. Hawkins describes such omissions, in which a person "has a preexisting moral obligation to aid [another person] but fails to do so" as "cases of *positive obligation flouting*" (254). Whether or not positive obligation flouting causes harm depends on the particular obligations one person owes to another. For instance, a doctor's refusal to treat her patient epitomizes an unethical action; the doctor causes harm through the positive obligation flouting of the established obligation doctors have to treat their patients (Hawkins 257). However, since "[h]ealing is not internal to the special goals of research" (Hawkins 262), researchers must fulfill a different role than doctors and therefore must have different obligations. Hawkins defines such obligations as "*Good Samaritan obligation*[s]" which "everyone has simply in virtue of being a moral agent" (257). However, unlike the obligations of doctors, Good Samaritan obligations cannot be enforced. For placebo-controlled studies, there are three conditions which warrant a researcher to flout his or her Good Samaritan obligation. The conditions indicate that "the aim of the research must be morally weighty . . . a placebo-controlled trial must be the *only* way to obtain the information in question . . . [and] . . . the community from which the subjects will be drawn must be one that could greatly benefit, and is also reasonably likely to benefit, from the research"

(Hawkins 273). Therefore, if a trial meets all three conditions, the researchers can ethically flout their obligations to aid the study subjects by administering placebos.

The exploitation in the TSUS and the HIV placebo-controlled trials demonstrated that while the TSUS was unethical due to its harmful outcome, the circumstances of the HIV trials warranted the use of placebos. The TSUS clearly denoted procedural unfairness since the doctors led the men to believe that they had received treatment (Jones 119) and encouraged the men's participation through incentives, such as payment for a proper burial (Brandt 25). In contrast, numerous reviewers scrutinized the study designs of the HIV placebo-controlled trials to ensure that the trials aligned with ethical standards (Dept. of Health and Human Services) thus eliminating any procedural unfairness.

On the other hand, outcome unfairness was undoubtedly present in the TSUS and the HIV placebo-controlled studies since the designs of the studies denied treatment to all of the Tuskegee men and some of the HIV-positive women. The outcome unfairness of the TSUS resulted in harm since the study leaders presented themselves as doctors to the men without the intention to actually treat the men. However, because the HIV trials involved researchers, the administration of placebos was not automatically unethical. Furthermore, the trials met the three general conditions which warrant a researcher to flout his or her Good Samaritan obligation to treat a sick study participant. The need for the trials was greatly demonstrated by the fact that, as Ivory Coast doctor Rene Anatole Ehounou Ekpini noted, "the alternative [to the placebo-controlled trials] is giving everyone here the placebo treatment, because if you step outside, that is what pregnant women with the disease are getting here: nothing" (qtd. in French). Upon reviewing the study designs for HIV drug trials, the World Health Organization asserts that "placebo-controlled trials offer the best option for obtaining rapid and scientifically valid results" (World Health Organization). Also, since the objective of the trials was "the exploration of alternative regimens that could be used in the developing world" (World Health Organization), the women of the developing countries stood to gain enormous benefits from the trials "as there [was] currently no effective alternative for HIV-infected pregnant women [in those parts of the world]" (World Health Organization). Therefore, the use of the placebos,

although exploitative, was not unethical since the particular circumstances authorized the researchers to flout their obligations.

Critics of the HIV placebo-controlled trials maintain that the use of placebos was not warranted by the HIV trials nor were they ethically sound to begin with. Many disagree that the local standard of care of no treatment in developing countries justified the use of placebos. Indeed, the placebo control groups raised ethical implications, especially in light of the Declaration of Helsinki which states that "every patient entered into the study should be assured of access to the best proven prophylactic, diagnostic and therapeutic methods identified by the study" (Declaration of Helsinki). In addition, guidelines which state that "[t]he ethical standards applied [in the developing country] should be no less exacting than they would be in the case of research carried out in [the sponsoring] country" (Lurie 853) indicates that since the use of placebos in a United States HIV trial would be unethical since an effective treatment had been established (World Health Organization), the same applies to U.S.-led trials in developing countries.

Furthermore, many critics advance, and even some defenders acquiesce, the belief that a placebo-controlled study was not the only way to obtain the desired information (Lurie 854). For instance, an HIV trial for pregnant women in Thailand did not involve placebos since the study leaders asserted that a placebo control group would be unethical. However, a researcher involved acknowledges that "[a]dding a placebo arm to our study design could provide added reassurance that the [treatment] is as effective in the Thai population as in the original study and a more definite estimate of the degree of efficacy of the shortened regimen over no treatment" (Lie 190). In other words, while both critics and defenders indicate that a non-placebo HIV trial was indeed possible, they both recognize that a placebo-controlled trial provided the most reliable information and the quickest way to develop a drug applicable to the developing world. Despite the exploitation that resulted from the use of placebos, the placebo-controlled trials remained the most effective solution to the problem at hand.

While Nicole's story demonstrates her vulnerability to exploitation, it also establishes her opportunity, and the opportunity of her country, to gain from the trials despite the use of placebos. This is not to say that

a placebo-controlled study was the optimal solution to the problem. In an ideal situation, researchers would be able to give the HIV drug to every woman in desperate need of treatment. But such methods might be equated to placing a Band-Aid over a knife wound: a short-term solution for a long-term problem. Still, placebo-controlled trials are not warranted in every situation. The use of placebos in the HIV trials held in developing countries did not set a precedent for the use of placebos in future trials. However, the depth of the debate surrounding the trials and the thorough review of study designs did set an important precedent for future trials to follow. No longer are people satisfied with silence when they believe study participants are being exploited. No longer are researchers content with study designs that give results but inflict harm upon participants. The outspoken opposition of critics and the careful methods of researchers prove that the placebo-controlled HIV trials have indeed come very far from Tuskegee.

Works Cited

Angell, Marcia. "The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World." *New England Journal of Medicine* 337.12 (1997): 847–849. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Web. 31 Mar. 2012. <http://www.nejm.org/>.

Brandt, Allan M. "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment." *Tuskegee's Truths: Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study*. Ed. Susan M. Reverby. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. 15–33. Print.

Declaration of Helsinki IV, 52nd WMA Assembly, Edinburgh. Oct. 2000. *U.S Food and Drug Administration*. Web. 2 Apr. 2012. <http://www.fda.gov/>.

French, Howard W. "AIDS Research in Africa: Juggling Risks and Hopes." *New York Times* 9 Oct. 1997: n. pag. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*. Web. 3 Apr. 2012. <http://proquest.com >.

Hawkins, Jennifer S. "Exploitation and Placebo Controls." *Exploitation and Developing Countries*. Ed. Jennifer S Hawkins and Ezekiel J Emmanuel. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. 264–285. Print.

Jones, James H. *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*. New York: The Free Press, 1981. Print.

Lie, Reidar K. "The HIV Perinatal Transmission Studies and the Debate About the Revision of the Helsinki Declaration." *Healthy Thoughts: European Perspectives on Health Care Ethics*. Ed. Reider K Lie and Paul T Schotsman. Bondgenotenlaan: Peeters, 2002. 189–206. Print.

Lurie, Peter, and Sidney M. Wolfe. "Unethical Trials of Interventions to Reduce Perinatal Transmission of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus in Developing Countries." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 337.12 (1997): 853–855. *The New England Journal of Medicine.* Web. 31 Mar. 2012.< http://www.nejm.org/>.

Sperling, Rhoda S, et al. "Maternal Viral Load, Zidovudine Treatment, and the Risk of Transmission of Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 From Mother to Infant." *The New England Journal of Medicine.* 335.22 (1996): 1621–1629. *The New England Journal of Medicine.* Web. 1 Apr. 2012. < http://www.nejm.org/>.

United States Department of Health and Human Services. *The Conduct of Clinical Trials of Maternal–Infant Transmission of HIV Supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services in Developing Countries.* Washington, D.C.: Department of Health and Human Services, July 1997. Web. 7 Apr. 2012. <http://www.columbia.edu>.

Varmus, Harold and David Satcher. "Ethical Complexities of Conducting Research in Developing Countries." *Tuskegee's Truths: Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study*. Ed. Susan M. Reverby Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. 584–588. Print.

World Health Organization. *Recommendations from the Meeting on Mother-to-Infant Transmission of HIV by Use of Antiretrovirals*. Geneva: World Health Organization, June 23–25, 1994. Web. 7 Apr. 2012. <http://www.columbia.edu>.

KIMBERLY CLARK is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences studying biological anthropology and public health. She plans to pursue a career in science communications. This essay was written for Melanie Smith's course, WR 150: Ethical Issues in Public Health.

From the Instructor

In "Reading Disaster," students explore the idea and practice of witness as it relates to disasters past and present. In particular, the course focuses on the motives, techniques, politics, and controversies of the memorial act, by way of such topics as individual and collective memory, the ethics of representation, and the aestheticization and abstraction of atrocity.

Julianne Corbin engages with a number of these concerns in her final course essay, an analysis of Maya Lin's seminal Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) in Washington, D.C. The assignment for the course's second essay provided Julianne with a testing ground and a template for thinking about what memorial means in the United States. In that essay, about the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), also in Washington, D.C., Julianne explained the historical situation that gave rise to the memorial, analyzed the museum's architecture and exhibits relative to some of the concepts we'd explored in class, and summarized and analyzed the critical and popular reception of the memorial. Her thinking about both the USHMM and the VVM was informed by another class assignment—to visit and write a blog post about Boston's own New England Holocaust Memorial (NEHM), which relates to the USHMM in content and to the VVM in form and intention.

Over the semester, Julianne worked diligently to clarify her terms; problems with syntax and diction in evidence in the second paper are not there by the final paper. But what I especially appreciate about "Memory & Form: An Analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial" is Julianne's willingness to embrace complexity, not only in terms of the VVM's form, but also—and perhaps more importantly—in terms of how that form impacts viewer experience and continued engagement with a controversial historical event and memorial. The Vietnam War may be over, but—Julianne argues—Maya Lin's design remains relevant into the next century.

— Jessica Bozek

From the Writer

My initial interest in the topic of memory and form stemmed from my second paper for this class entitled "Memorial and Memory: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum." The paper primarily focused on the role of living memorials in preserving memory while considering the individual nature of memory. I wanted to expand upon this idea by examining different forms of memory and their relation to two different groups of people: those who had direct memories of an event and those who did not.

This study became the basis for my paper and the overall structure of my argument. While I knew the general idea of how I wanted to approach the study, my research on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial provided much of the structure and detail within my arguments. The varied research and commentaries available on the memorial led in a number of different directions, many of which were in direct conflict. It was by analyzing and incorporating both argument and counter-argument for each form in my paper that I was able to paint a complete picture of the effectiveness of form on different degrees of memory. Additionally, concerns I worked to address with this paper were developing a strong thesis, which many readers took issue with during the drafting process, and achieving sound grammar and sentence structure throughout the paper.

— Julianne Corbin

Julianne Corbin

Memory and Form: An Analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

On November 11, 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) was completed, ten years after the end of the bitter and divisive Vietnam War that tore the United States apart. After ten years of shame, anger, and painful fights over US participation in the Vietnam War, the sacrifice and courage of the soldiers who fought was finally to be recognized and remembered. Speaking at the wall for a Veterans Day ceremony, President Reagan declared, "The night is over. We see these men and know them once again and know how much we owe them, how much they've given us, and how much we can never fully repay" (Reagan 2). However, in light of the conflict surrounding the Vietnam War, the impact of the form of the memorial on the memorialization process and the overall memory of the Vietnam War remains in question.

Psychologists define memory as "the processes that are used to acquire, store, retain and later retrieve information" (Cherry 1). This is traditionally broken into three phases: encoding, storage, and retrieval. While the encoding and storage phases both refer to the creation of memory, retrieval is focused on the process of recalling memory. As memory stands at the heart of all memorialization, this paper focuses primarily on the ways in which form impacts memorialization, vis-a-vis, the process of creating and evoking individual and collective memory. Particular emphasis will be placed on the differences between abstract (i.e. non-representational) and representational forms of memorial and their impact on the process of memorializing. This analysis will be accomplished through study of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. and by deconstructing the memorial into three main parts: the black wall cutting into

the earth, the names inscribed upon the wall, and the statue of the soldiers *as they were*. The study will focus primarily upon the impact of form upon retrieval of memory, the impact of form upon the creation of memory, and the effectiveness of these two processes over the life cycle of memory.

Over the course of this paper, there will be references to a number of similar terms with strikingly different connotations. While this essay places the primary focus upon memory as it is defined above, memorial and memorialization will also be of key concern. While memorial refers to an object which serves as a focal point for the act of remembering, memorialization refers more pointedly to the act of remembering itself. Ahenk Yilmaz, Professor of Architecture at Dokuz Eylül University, asserts that "memorialization as the reification of past experiences crystallizes the bi-directional relation between memory and architecture in its pure form" (Yilmaz 1). Memorials are generally artistic works and thus can have many forms and aesthetics. This paper will focus on two main forms of memorial: abstract and representational. Representational memorials tend to resemble the objects they aim to represent, while abstract memorials do not resemble any specific physical object. In contrast, abstract memorials are more likely to reference non-visual items, like an emotion or an experience. These terms will be used frequently throughout this paper.

Analysis of the impact of memorial form upon memorialization rests upon close study of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM). The purpose of the VVM is to honor members of the United States Armed Forces who fought and died during the Vietnam War. The memorial consists of a roughly 250-foot long series of polished black gabbros walls sunk into the surrounding countryside (see Figure 1). Upon the walls are inscribed 58,000 names of servicemen who were declared Killed in Action (KIA) or Missing in Action (MIA) during the Vietnam War. The names are listed in chronological order beginning at the apex of the wall and visitors who come to view the names are able to see their own reflection in the black walls. The end points of the wall point to the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. A few feet away from the entrance to the wall stands a bronze statue of three U.S. servicemen, outfitted exactly as they would have been during the Vietnam War. They are called "The Three Soldiers" and act as a traditional supplement to the VVM's more abstract nature. It is important to note that "The Three Soldiers" was not part of Maya Lin's

original design for the VVM and was, in fact, added two years later in response to an outpouring of veteran support for a memorial of this form.

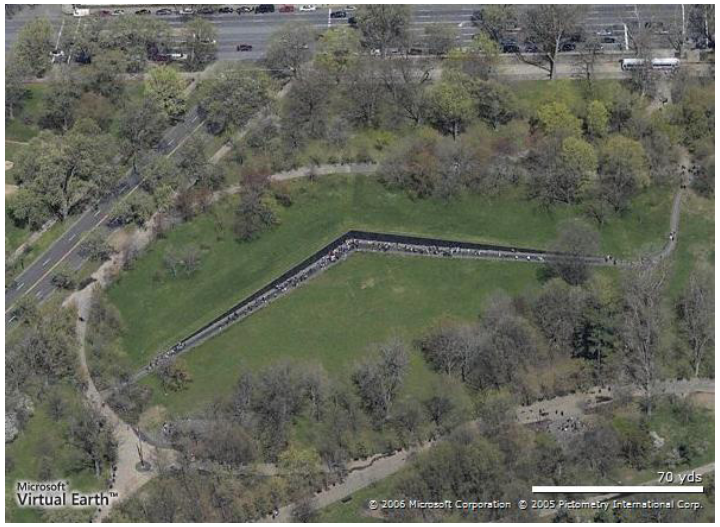

Figure 1. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Photo by Brian McMorrow.

There are a number of subtle aspects of the form of the VVM that impact the process of remembering. Of the parts that will be discussed in this paper, the black, reflective wall is the most controversial and abstract. Described as "'the black gash of shame', a 'degrading ditch,' a 'black spot in American history,' a 'tomb-stone,' a 'slap in the face,' and a 'wailing wall for draft dodgers and New Lefters of the future,'" the black wall was received negatively by some veterans, who interpreted it as "a political statement about the shame of an unvictorious war" (Sturken 68). However, the wall's ambiguous nature lends itself to multiple interpretations. In her commentary on her design, Maya Lin states, "I wanted to create a memorial that everyone would be able to respond to, regardless of whether one thought our country should or should not have participated in the war" (Lin 2). While for many the wall continued to be a symbol of shame, for others the wall evoked a plethora of different interpretations and reflections. Sturken notes,

> To the veterans, the wall is an atonement for their treatment since the war; to the families and friends of those who died, it is an official recognition of their sor-

> row and an opportunity to express a grief that was not previously sanctioned; to others, it is either a profound antiwar statement or an opportunity to rewrite the history of the war to make it fit more neatly into the master narrative of American imperialism. (Sturken 80)

The wall's capacity to evoke diverse individual reflections on the Vietnam War can be chiefly attributed to its design. While the wall sits among some of the most famous monuments to American history on the Washington Mall, its striking difference from traditional forms of memorial reflect the controversy surrounding the Vietnam War. While the wall points toward both the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, gently acknowledging past forms of memorial, the VVM is designed not with looming pillars of white granite, but instead "is not visible until one is almost upon it, and if approached from behind seems to disappear into the landscape" (Sturken 66). The memorial is not designed to represent any particular image or item and instead reflects the stigma inflicted upon veterans returning home from the war. Veterans were expected to act as if they had not sacrificed for their country and to separate themselves from a war where they were often seen as complicit in an abuse of American power. The wall reflects this sentiment and evokes the veterans' implicit feeling of abandonment while simultaneously providing a safe haven for memorialization and remembrance. It does not dictate the narrative of memory and instead promotes personal reflection because of its abstract form, leaving individuals to analyze and interpret their memories as they will.

In contrast to the abstract form of the black wall of the VVM, the names inscribed upon the wall (see Figure 2) are of a decidedly more representational form. While many may not think of a name as a representational memorial, a name directly represents an individual. It is a word that stands for a being. The names as representations of individuals tend to evoke very specific memories about that individual. In "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past," Professors Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz assert that "to list the names of every fallen soldier, with no symbolic reference to the cause or country for which they died, immediately highlights the individual" (42). By visiting the names and locating those they knew and lost, visitors are able to evoke and

reflect upon very personal, specific memories. Maya Lin also discusses the representational nature of the names in her reflections on her design, writing, "the use of names was a way to bring back everything someone could remember about a person . . . the ability of a name to bring back every single memory you have of that person is far more realistic and specific and much more comprehensive than a still photograph" (Lin 3).

Figure 2. The names upon the wall. Photo from Mapseeing.com.

However, the arrangement of the names along the wall is also important in the process of memorializing the individuals who died as part of the Vietnam War. The names are arranged along the length of the wall in chronological order of death throughout the course of the war. As Lin describes, "a progression in time is memorialized. The design is not just a list of the dead. To find one name, chances are you will see the others close by, and you will see yourself reflected through them" (Lin 5). Thus, the names also exhibit a degree of abstraction in their ability to mirror the individual viewer. The chronological grouping of deaths would tend to group those who died around the same time (*i.e.*: companies of soldiers) together, causing those who reflected upon the names of their comrades in arms to see their own sacrifice and beliefs mirrored in the reflective surface of the wall. In a sense, this "created a psychological space for them that directly focused on human response and feeling" (Lin 11), where the

names could portray in an abstract sense the viewer's own sacrifice, while at the same time memorializing a given person.

Figure 3. The Three Soldiers. From United Press International, Inc.

In direct contrast to the wall, "The Three Soldiers" (see Figure 3) stands as an example of traditional aesthetics of memorialization that utilize representative form to evoke memory. The statue was meant to portray the soldiers exactly as they existed during the war, right down to the diversity of ethnicities. It was designed to serve as the humanizing face of the war, as veterans feared that "the sunken black wall would be a 'memorial to the dead,' not to living veterans, and that it would be a 'grisly reminder of something ugly and shameful in America's past'" (Hagopian 106). The more traditional representational form of memorial exemplified by "The Three Soldiers" focuses memorialization on a specific aspect of the war, namely the soldiers. It evokes very explicit emotions of pride and acceptance for the soldiers' efforts and sacrifice. The use of a specific image to memorialize an event, however, often limits the form and extent of the memory evoked in the memorialization process. Yilmaz asserts that "a direct denotation between the event and its representation minimizes

the variations in the collective remembering process" (8). Lin agrees with Yilmaz's argument in her criticism of the incorporation of the statue into the design, arguing that "a specific object or image would be limiting. A realistic sculpture would be only one interpretation of that time. I wanted something that all people could relate to on a personal level" (Lin). Thus, while the representative statue presents a more patriotic and sympathetic view towards the war, it is limited by its ability to evoke a diverse spread of memories and de-personalizes the memorialization process.

It is relatively easy to discuss memorialization for those directly affected by the Vietnam War, who can draw upon their own memories of the event to remember; however, it is more complicated to analyze the memorialization process for individuals unfamiliar with the event and who have no inherent memories to draw upon. It requires that we ask how an event can be remembered, and therefore memorialized, when those who memorialize have no memories to draw upon. In essence, the experience of visiting the wall becomes a personal memory in itself for the viewer that mimics actual remembrance of the Vietnam War. The form of the VVM is structured so as to evoke the feelings and emotions of the war, regardless of whether the viewer experienced the war or not.

The aim of the VVM was not to be to a political or social commentary regarding the Vietnam War, but a dialogue regarding those who died. The *New York Times* noted at the initial opening of the memorial that the wall "seems to capture all the feelings of ambiguity and anguish that the Vietnam War evoked [and] conveys the only point about the war on which people may agree: that those who died should be remembered" (qtd. In Schwartz 36). For those unfamiliar with the Vietnam War, the wall and inscribed names serve simply as a "journey to an awareness of immeasurable loss" (Lin) surrounding the war and the identities of those who sacrificed. The experience of war can be felt in the structure of the memorial as "an initial violence that heals in time but leaves a memory, like a scar" (Lin). The walls of the memorial cut into the earth with a sudden violence that eventually heals and sinks back into the land around it; however, the violence remains as polished black walls that reflect the viewer's own image among the names of the dead, allowing viewers to "participate in the memorial" (Sturken 66). Thus, viewers experience the sharp violence of the Vietnam War as they enter the memorial and confront the enormity of

the loss as they descend further along the wall. Overall, the experience of visiting the wall becomes a personal memory that mimics actual memory of the Vietnam War.

This same creation of memory can be seen in visitors' interactions with the names inscribed upon the wall of the VVM. In "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: An Invitation to Argument," Professor Ehrenhaus asserts that there are three types of visitors who come to view the names listed on the memorial wall: mourners, searchers, and volunteers (which were once mourners or searchers and choose to help new visitors). Mourners are typically those with personal connections to the names listed on the wall and often treat their journeys as a "secular pilgrimage" to leave "artifacts of commemoration" in honor of their loved ones (Haines 6). Searchers, on the other hand, have no material connection with the names on the wall and "search for ways of participating as broadly as possible in discovering the Memorial's meanings" (qtd. in Haines 6). "For searchers," Ehrenhaus asserts, "meaning arises in part from memory, but mainly from the chance and momentary encounters with mourners and artifacts of the Memorial's social world" (qtd. in Haines 7). In effect, the searchers come to the wall not to reflect on memories of those lost like the mourners, but as an experience that creates their own emotional connection to the event. However, this distinction highlights a key difference in the memorialization process between abstract and representational memorialization. Abstract memorials allow for those without direct memory and emotional connection to the event to develop their own memories of the event; the names themselves inspire no direct connection or memory beyond the fact that death occurred. Those without an emotional connection to the names driven by memory will not necessarily have the same memorialization experience as those who do. This will impair the purpose of the memorial, which is to remember; viewers cannot remember what they do not know.

This same drawback is present in the "The Three Soldiers." While the form is effective in promoting the memorialization process in those who have a memory of the event, it becomes less relevant to those without an emotional connection. It provides little for those without a frame of reference outside of the history books and seems to exist simply for the memorialization process of the veterans (and even only a narrow subset of that group as it depicts only infantrymen). However, while viewing the

statue upon its own it may do little for the memory creation process for new viewers to the VVM, when combined with the experience of visiting the black wall and names inscribed upon it, "The Three Soldiers" may play a crucial role. The designer of the statue, Frederick Hart, had a very concise view of the statue's relation to the rest of the VVM as he wrote in his initial thoughts on the statue. He writes, "I see the wall as a kind of ocean, a sea of sacrifice that is overwhelming and nearly incomprehensible in the sweep of names. I place these figures upon the shore of that sea, gazing upon it, standing vigil before it, reflecting the human face of it, the human heart" (quoted in Holland 39). As the statue is at eye level to onlookers, the statue serves much the same purpose as Ehrenhaus's description of the interaction between searchers and mourners. The soldiers in the statue look out onto the wall and provide a human face of mourning and loss. The searchers' initial interaction with the statue sets the expectation that this is a memorial to human loss and creates a sense of personal connection with those who sacrificed before entering the memorial. Thus, the statue strengthens the memorialization process by creating a relationship between the new viewer and those who sacrificed by playing upon the viewer's inherent empathy for the human form.

Susan Sontag writes in her analysis of photography, "All memory is individual, unreproducible—it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not remembering but a stipulating: that this is important and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our mind" (1). It is true that memory fades. Forgetting sets in and it is the responsibility of memorials to remind us that an event actually occurred and had an impact on life. This demands that we ask how effective the VVM will be as a memorial over the life-cycle of memory. How will the memorial impact our collective and societal image of the Vietnam War? In the beginning, all of the aspects of the VVM work in harmony. "The Three Soldiers" statue and the names inscribed upon the wall evoke a specific memory and remembrance while the black wall and order of the names evoke a more generalized feeling of loss and time. Each is relatively more effective in evoking or creating memory. As a whole, they can create a complete process. Over time, as the details of the war fade and the process of forgetting sets in, the memories evoked by "The Three Soldiers" and the names inscribed upon the wall will fade. Their representational form

will transition from a role of evoking memory to that of creating memory and informing history; however, their juxtaposition with the black abstract wall injects the emotions and lessons of the war into the representational elements' historical and informative backdrop. Thus, even as the memorial's capacity to reach genuine memory of the event and provoke remembrance fades, its elements will work together to re-create the memorialization process for new viewers, keeping the collective memory of the event alive.

In practice, the form of memorial dramatically impacts the process of memorialization. In the case of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which incorporates both representational and abstract forms of memorial, the form works effectively by balancing the drawbacks of one form against the benefits of the other to achieve lasting collective memory. While the representational elements of the design are successful in evoking memory in those with a direct relation to the event, the narrow focus of the memorial and requirement of prior memory limits the scope of memorialization possible at the site. This effect is balanced out by the memorial's abstract designs, which convey the emotional feeling of the event regardless of whether the viewer has prior memory, and is augmented by the representational elements which provide historical reference points for the viewer. Overall, the elements of the design work together to maintain the relevance of that which is memorialized and to cement the event into collective memory.

Works Cited

Cherry, Kendra. "An Overview of Memory." *Memory*. About.com Psychology. Web. 05 Dec. 2011. <http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/a/memory.htm>.

Hagopian, Patrick. "The Discourse of Healing and the 'Black Gash of Shame'." *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2009. 79–110. Print.

Haines, Harry W. "Disputing the Wreckage: Ideological Struggle at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial." *The United States and the Vietnam War: Significant Scholarly Articles*. Ed. Walter L. Hixson. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000. 1–16. Print.

Holland, Jesse J. *Black Men Built the Capitol: Discovering African-American History in and around Washington, D.C.* Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot, 2007. Print.

Lin, Maya. "Making the Memorial." *Nybooks.com. The New York Review of Books,* 2 Nov. 2000. Web. 30 Nov. 2011. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/nov/02/making-the-memorial/?pagination=false>.

McMorrow, Brian. "Memorial of Vietnam Veterans." Online image. Photorena.com. Photorena. 4 December 2011.

Reagan, Ronald. " Remarks at the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial " 11 November, 1988. *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. National Archives and Records Administration*. Web. 04 Dec. 2011. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1988/111188b.htm>.

Schwartz, Barry and Wagner-Pacifici, Robin. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." *The United States and the Vietnam War: Significant Scholarly Articles*. Ed. Walter L. Hixson. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000. 18–62. Print.

Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador, 2003. 85–88. Print.

Sturken, Marita. "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial."*The United States and the Vietnam War: Significant Scholarly Articles.* Ed. Walter L. Hixson. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000. 64–88. Print.

"Vietnam Veterans Memorial." Online image. Mapseeing.com. Mapseeing. 4 December 2011.

"Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day." Online image. Upi.com. United Press International, Inc. 4 December 2011.

Yilmaz, Ahenk. "Memorialization as the Art of Memory : A Method to Analyse Memorials." *Journal of the Faculty of Architecture.* 27.1 (2010): 267–280. Web.

JULIANNE CORBIN is a recent graduate of the Boston University Dual Degree Program majoring in Economics & Business Administration with a concentration in Management Information Systems. Originally from historic Valley Forge, PA, Julianne spent her time at BU tutoring first graders in the Boston Public School System as part of the Boston University Initiative for Literary Development. She enjoys cooking, traveling and relaxing with a good cup of coffee in her spare time. Post-graduation, Julianne will be working for Ernst & Young as an IT Risk & Assurance Consultant. This essay was written for Jessica Bozek's course, WR 150: Reading Disaster.

From the Instructor

Tyler Guarneri's essay—"Love and Hate in Appalachia"—as a capstone essay for our WR 150 seminar, is as deeply researched and meticulously documented as it is gracefully argued and intelligently arranged. In this legal analysis, Tyler capably anticipates readers' needs. He knows what the reader needs to know, and he timely iterates and reiterates key aspects of the legal cases and the intricate scholarly arguments comprising his substantial body of evidence. This courageous and judicious analysis enables the author to hold fast to his critical perspective even as he dispassionately argues for the expressive rights of those who hold discriminatory and bigoted views.

— Bradley Queen

From the Writer

When researching my final paper, I wanted to write about the rights of gay students in response to the recent string of high school suicides. I stumbled upon the events in Boyd County and found that they provided a lively story that coincided with many of the legal issues affecting gay high school students. In writing the paper, I drew some inspiration from articles in legal journals, while maintaining a temporal narrative.

— Tyler Guarneri

Tyler Guarneri

Love and Hate in Appalachia: Freedom of Speech for Gay and Anti-Gay Students in Boyd County, Kentucky

Although great progress has been made for gay rights since the 1970's, personal and institutionalized homophobia continues throughout much of the nation. This is most evident in some public school districts, where harassment of actual and perceived gay students is rampant, and school policies fall short of protecting the students' rights.[1] At this local level, the debate continues on how to secure the rights and safety of GLBT students and their allies, while maintaining the rights of those who oppose homosexuality. A series of court battles in Boyd County, Kentucky highlights many of the First Amendment issues at stake. An analysis of these cases reveals that federal policies are adequate for balancing the opposing freedom of speech interests of gay and anti-gay students. However, the federal government is not omniscient, and cannot protect every student. Therefore, it is ultimately up to each school district to create fair policies that follow federal guidelines.

Boyd County is a small rural county nestled between the Ohio and Big Sandy rivers in the Appalachian foothills of Eastern Kentucky. But the calm of this idyllic setting has been shattered by the screech of a megaphone chanting "faggot-kisser" and "fag-lover" at a high school basketball game.[2] Boyd County School District has seen the spillover from a vicious and outspoken group of homophobic citizens. The district has struggled with blatant harassment of actual and perceived gay students. One student

declared in English class that "they needed to take all the fucking faggots out in the back woods and kill them."[3] At least two students dropped out of school because of anti-gay bullying.[4] Some students and school officials have struggled to curb this harassment, but they have been met with heated opposition. This tension sparked a series of court battles that highlight a pivotal question facing schools across the country. How can a school secure the rights and safety of gay students while maintaining the rights of those who oppose homosexuality? In this essay, I will examine *Boyd County High School GSA v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County* and the surrounding incidents and case law to determine how a school district might protect gay students' rights to free speech under federal law. I will next study *Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County* to understand a school district's responsibilities towards anti-gay students. Finally, anti-discrimination law will be analyzed in terms of how it applies to the protection of gay students. This paper will conclude that, if a school district follows federal and constitutional law, the rights and safety of both gay and anti-gay students will be preserved.

A group of Boyd County High School students, discontented with the culture of hatred in their school, began a petition to form a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) in January of 2002. The stated goal of the proposed GSA was to "provide students with a safe haven to talk about anti-gay harassment and to work together to promote tolerance, understanding and acceptance."[5] However, the mere petition resulted in a severe backlash by students opposed to same-sex relationships. Some of these anti-GSA students wore shirts to school that read "Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve."[6] In March of that year, and again in September, gay and allied students submitted applications for the formation of the GSA. Both applications were denied. In late September, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Kentucky sent the Board of Education a letter regarding the legal issues of their rejection of the GSA. James Esseks of the ACLU stated that "if the students want to start a GSA at a public school, they have every legal right to do so."[7]

The legal authority to form the GSA stems from both the First Amendment and the Equal Access Act. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, and the Supreme Court has ruled that students retain this right in public schools in *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969). Justice Fortas,

writing for the majority, famously stated, "It could hardly be argued that students and teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate."[8] The Court ruled that a school can only restrict student speech that would "materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school."[9] The Supreme Court is especially defensive of student speech when it involves optional, noncurricular activities.[10]

The Equal Access Act was passed by Congress in 1984 to give students a tool to defend their First Amendment rights. The Act forbids public high schools from denying access to a noncurricular club "based on the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech" at the club. There are three important exceptions built into the Act. First, the school must have a "limited public forum" to be protected by the law. The Act defines a "limited public forum" to include any school that allows at least one noncurricular club. Second, like Tinker, the law excludes substantially disruptive clubs from its protection. Third, the Act only guarantees equal access to school resources for noncurricular clubs.[11]

When the Act was passed, its focus was to protect religious clubs that were being banned in schools throughout the country. While affirming the constitutionality of the Act in *Board of Ed. of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens* (1990), Justice Kennedy predicted that, in the future, "clubs of a more controversial character may have access to student life."[12] This prediction proved true in 1999 when the District Court of Utah ruled that the Board of Education of Salt Lake City must allow a GSA.[13] Several other GSA cases followed, with almost all courts granting GSAs access to school facilities under the Equal Access Act.[14] The law makes it incredibly clear; a school with a limited open forum *must* give equal access to facilities to non-disruptive GSAs.

This openness to GSAs, needless to say, has seen great opposition. The American Family Association of Pennsylvania argues that GSAs should be prohibited, since "encourag[ing] a dangerous lifestyle is irresponsible."[15] Matthew Hilton argues that a school should try to circumvent the law by teaching a "morally based civic virtue" curriculum. A GSA, he argues, would be directly related and opposed to this curriculum, and could be banned.[16] Indeed, the District Court for Northern Texas affirmed the banning of a GSA, in part, because it conflicted with the school's

abstinence policy.[17] This court ruled that the GSA created an "interference with [the school district's] educational mission and function in that it contravene[d] [the school district's] abstinence-only policies."[18]

Sarah Orman argues against the legality of the Texas district court's ruling: "[The GSA's] stated goals are . . . primarily to discuss sexual identity and political activism rather than actual sexual conduct."[19] Banning the club on these grounds contradicts both the Equal Access Act and the First Amendment. In a broader sense, declaring a GSA curricular, as was suggested by Hilton and implemented in Texas, has wide and disastrous consequences. Surely, many social conservatives would object to a Bible Club being banned because its discussions about creationism contradict a school's teachings on evolution. Despite the American Family Association and other gay opponents' concerns, there is simply no legal standing to ban GSAs by labeling them curricular. A GSA can only be prohibited if the club is disruptive or if all noncurricular clubs are banned.

The Boyd County School District attempted to utilize these exact loopholes to ban the GSA there. On October 28, after the ACLU reminded the school district of its legal obligation under the Equal Access Act, the Board of Education briefly approved the GSA.[20] Opposition to the GSA exploded over the next few weeks. On October 30, about one hundred of the high school's 937 students staged a protest against the GSA outside of the school. Protesters shouted at students entering the building, "If you go inside, you're supporting faggots."[21] On November 4, about half of the student population skipped school in protest.[22] The principal feared that open violence would occur over the issue.[23] It is important to note that no GSA member was accused of provoking any of the anti-GSA students.

On December 20, in response to this opposition, the Board of Education banned *all* noncurricular clubs.[24] "It is truly shameful that the School Board has decided to sacrifice the needs of all its students rather than permit this group of students to meet to address issues of tolerance and diversity," said James Esseks of the ACLU. "This decision is frightfully similar to the days when many cities chose to shut down public swimming pools rather than let African Americans use them."[25] The school, despite its ban, allowed certain other clubs to continue using its facilities,

including Drama Club, Bible Club, Executive Club and Beta Club. In order to do so, it labeled these clubs as curricular.[26]

The GSA filed suit against the Board of Education in the Federal District Court for Eastern Kentucky. They reasoned that the school was in violation of the Equal Access Act since the GSA was not given the same resources as the clubs that were allowed to continue after the ban. The Board of Education argued that it was not in violation of the Act for two reasons. First, they claimed that only curricular clubs were using school resources, so the school was not required to permit noncurricular clubs under the Equal Access Act. Second, the Board claimed that the GSA caused major disruptions to the school, so its ban was permitted by the Act and by *Tinker*.

With respect to the first claim, Judge Bunning, who presided over the case, deferred to *Mergens*, which defined "noncurricular clubs" to include all clubs that do not *directly* relate to the body of courses taught by the school.[27] Judge Bunning reasoned that Drama Club, Bible Club, Executives Club and Beta Club are not directly related to the curriculum, so they are noncurricular. The Board was therefore compelled by the Equal Access Act to provide the GSA equal access to school resources unless the club could be found disruptive.[28]

Although there is no question that the GSA's existence did cause a significant disruption in the school, members of the GSA did not cause these disruptions. All of the incidents were devised by opponents of the club. In effect, the opponents were attempting to put a heckler's veto on the alliance's formation. Judge Bunning paralleled *Tinker* when deciding this claim. The Des Moines School District argued in *Tinker* that students could not wear black armbands to school, since other students made hostile remarks to those in armbands. The Supreme Court disagreed. "Any word spoken, in class, in the lunchroom, or on the campus, that deviates from the views of another person may start an argument or cause a disturbance. But our Constitution says we must take this risk . . ."[29] So, Judge Bunning reasoned, a heckler's veto could not be used to justify prohibition of the GSA.[30]

Taking into account these arguments, the district court granted an injunction requiring the Board of Education to give the GSA equal access to facilities.[31] Following the ruling, the Board signed a consent decree with

the GSA, promising, among other things, to give the club equal access to school resources, to implement a mandatory one-hour anti-harassment training session for students and to prohibit harassment or discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.[32] These new policies, nevertheless, did not end the controversy in Boyd County. They only secured a momentary victory for GLBT students, before one anti-gay student, Timothy Morrison, filed suit against the Board of Education raising a whole new set of First Amendment issues. Did the new training and harassment policies violate Morrison's freedom of speech?

Morrison has "sincerely held religious beliefs that homosexuality is harmful to those who practice it and harmful to society as a whole."[33] He believes that it is his duty to inform gay men and women that they are harming themselves and society. In this Federal District Court case, *Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County* (2006), he argued that the anti-harassment policy and the anti-harassment training both violated his freedom of speech.

As quoted in Morrison's case, the Boyd County School District Code of Conduct during the 2004–2005 school year stated:

> Harassment/Discrimination is unlawful behavior based on . . . perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. . . .
>
> The provisions in this policy shall not be interpreted as applying to speech otherwise protected under the state or federal constitutions where the speech does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the educational process.[34]

The school district policy called for up to a five day suspension and police referrals for offenders. Morrison argued that the policy infringed on his First Amendment right to freedom of speech, since it caused him to adjust the content of his speech for fear of punishment. There is no question that the rule changed the content of the plaintiff's speech; that was its intent. However, *Tinker* allows for restricting freedom of speech in public schools if the speech is "materially and substantially" disruptive.[35] We can see that the school code is tailored to meet the *Tinker* criteria, specifically permitting non-disruptive speech, so the code is constitutional. Nonetheless, Morrison and the Board reached an agreement regarding this claim

prior to the district court's decision, so the judge did not comment on the constitutionality of the code of conduct.

For anti-harassment training, the school district had adopted a one-hour video. Morrison stated that this video only permitted positive statements about homosexuality and banned critical viewpoints. This content-based restriction, he asserted, is constitutionally impermissible.[36] Judge Bunning, presiding over the case, found this argument legally unfounded. The video in question was not student speech; it was school-sponsored speech. This type of speech is governed by *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (1988). This case ruled that although pure student speech is protected under the First Amendment, a school "may refuse to lend its name . . . to student expression" when it is sponsoring speech, as long as the editorial control is "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns."[37] The only pure student speech that occurred during these training sessions was anonymous evaluations of the video. These evaluations were not censored.[38]

Finding Morrison's free-speech claims unfounded, Judge Bunning ruled against the plaintiff. Morrison appealed the decision to the Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit in *Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County* (2007). Morrison withdrew his claims regarding the anti-harassment training in the appeal, but he claimed that the district judge did not evaluate a damages claim regarding the code of conduct. The plaintiff requested financial compensation from the Board of Education for chilling his speech during the 2004–2005 school year.[39]

Judge Moore, writing the opinion for the case, deferred to a three-prong test derived from *Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife* (1992) to determine whether the plaintiff had standing to file suit against the school district for damages. The first prong of the test, which is the most relevant to the First Amendment issues in the case, states that the plaintiff must have "suffered an 'injury-in-fact'—an invasion of a legally protected interest which is (a) concrete and particularized and (b) 'actual' or 'imminent,' not 'conjectural' or 'hypothetical.'"[40] The Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit cited three cases from its sister circuits in arguing that a chill of speech can constitute an injury-in-fact.[41] So Judge Moore argued that the plaintiff could have a successful claim if he could prove that "an adverse action was taken against the plaintiff that would deter a person of ordinary firmness from continu-

ing to engage in [First Amendment-protected] conduct."[42] Since Morrison did not address this in his case, the Court of Appeals remanded the case back to the district court for further deliberation.

Before the case returned to the district court, however, the Board of Education petitioned the Court of Appeals to revisit its decision. In a new decision, *Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County* (2008), Judge Cook cited *Laird v. Tatum,* a 1973 Supreme Court case. In *Laird*, respondents filed a class action lawsuit against the Department of the Army, claiming that the Army's surveillance of legal actions chilled their speech.[43] The Court decided that, since the chilling arose only from the respondents perception of the Army's policies, the chill was subjective, which does not constitute an injury-in-fact.[44] The Court of Appeals argued that this same situation occurred at Boyd County High School and overturned its original decision. Morrison subjectively interpreted the code of conduct to be chilling of his speech, but no concrete actions were taken against him.[45] Judge Cook stated rather bluntly, "This is a case about nothing . . . Morrison lacks standing to pursue his claim of chilled speech."[46] So, the Court of Appeals denied the plaintiff damages.

Lujan and *Laird* have implications for both GLBT students and their opponents. As was seen with Morrison's appeal, damage claims regarding chilled speech are largely up to the discretion of the courts. Judge Moore found that Morrison's chilled speech claim could constitute injury-in-fact, while Judge Cook did not. Both were able to find precedents to support their own decisions. Clearly, this affects gay opponents who seek compensation for being restricted by anti-harassment codes. It is very possible that a school conduct code, unlike Boyd County's, could be unconstitutionally broad and not follow *Tinker.* In this situation, legitimate and non-disruptive speech could be chilled, which should justify compensation. But the opposing precedents of *Lujan* and *Laird* make the decision unpredictable. GLBT students and their allies on school staffs are also affected by the uncertainty caused by *Lujan* and *Laird*'s vagueness. Some school districts, most famously Anoka-Hennepin school district in Minnesota, ban staff from addressing sexual orientation and gender identity issues.[47] A recent bill that passed the Tennessee state senate attempts to impose a similar ban in all public elementary and middle schools in the

state.[48] If these policies are found unconstitutional, because of *Lujan* and *Laird,* it is unclear whether teachers and students would be able to seek damages.

On a broader scale, the question remains on how to balance the safety of GLBT students with the First Amendment rights of anti-gay students. The current anti-harassment policy of the Boyd County School District seems to be a good compromise. Gay students are protected from harassment, and gay opponents are free to voice their opinions in a non-disruptive and non-abusive manner. But, surely, not every school district in the country has reached this balance. Anoka-Hennepin School District, which bans teachers from mentioning sexual orientation, has seen seven teen suicides over the past two years. At least four of these students were bullied for being gay or being perceived to be gay. The Justice Department is investigating the school district for a civil rights complaint based on "allegations of . . . peer-on-peer harassment based on not conforming to gender stereotypes."[49]

But, does the Federal Government have a role to play in finding this balance of rights and safety in public schools? Although *Tinker* gives the Federal Government the authority to protect speech in public schools, it does not address safety issues. Traditionally, school safety has been a local and state issue, but some legal scholars argue that federal anti-harassment codes should be extended to protect GLBT youth.

Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex . . . be subjected to discrimination under any educational program.[50] This code has traditionally been used to enforce anti-harassment codes in schools based solely on gender. The Obama Administration, however, has recently reinterpreted the law more broadly. In a letter to colleagues, the Department of Education stated, "Although Title IX does not prohibit discrimination based solely on sexual orientation, Title IX does protect all students, including GLBT students, from sex discrimination." The letter argues that anti-gay harassment usually includes sex discrimination, and it uses the example of a gay teen who was called anti-gay slurs because he did not conform to gender stereotypes. This type of harassment is now governed by Title IX.[51]

This is exactly the reinterpretation called for by several legal scholars.[52] Yet, while the Obama administration has the authority to enforce

the law in this way, a school district that is prosecuted under this law could still appeal to a federal court. It would then be up to the judicial system to agree with the newly interpreted definition of the law, or to strike it down. Hopefully, the courts would allow the reinterpretation to stand, for some states and school districts, such as Anoka-Hennepin and formerly Boyd County, have shown unwillingness to confront the problem at the local level. Thus, federal intervention would seem to be necessary to govern school policies and to protect GLBT youth.

Despite some flaws, federal policies give a good legal framework for protecting the rights of GLBT and anti-gay students. The Equal Access Act gives gay students wishing to form a GSA the legal right to do so. *Tinker v. Des Moines* allows all students, regardless of sexual orientation, religion and political disposition, to speak freely about gay rights issues within the bounds of non-disruptiveness. The Obama Administration's reinterpretation of Title IX helps to protect actual and perceived gay students from harassment. Ultimately, however, the Federal Government cannot be expected to govern the policies of every school district in the country. It is primarily up to the school district to ensure the rights and safety of its students. The Boyd County School District showed that schools can handle the situation disastrously. By shutting down all clubs, the school infringed on the rights of gay students and their allies, while escalating the conflict. However, it eventually permitted the GSA, created and enforced a fair anti-harassment policy, and introduced anti-bullying training. In doing so, the board reversed some of the damage it caused. And by fighting for its policies in court, the school district demonstrated a new commitment to balancing gay and anti-gay students' safety and First Amendment rights. Other school districts should look at the successes and failures of the Boyd County Board of Education as an example in setting their own policies. If the kids of Appalachia can learn to love, not hate, then teenagers in Minnesota, Utah, Texas and the rest of the United States can as well.

Notes

1. Eisemann, "Protecting the Kids in the Hall," 125–6.
2. Boyd County High School GSA v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County, 258 F. Supp. 2d 667, (Dist. Court, ED Kentucky, 2003), 693.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 670.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 671.
7. ACLU, "ACLU Tells School Council It Must Allow:." [page?]
8. Tinker v. Des Moines, 393 US 503, (1969), 506.
9. Ibid., 513.
10. Riener, "Pride and Prejudice," 617–8.
11. Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. §4071 (1984).
12. Board of Ed. of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, 496 US 226, (1990), 259.
13. East High GSA v. Board of Ed. of Salt Lake City, 30 F. Supp. 2d 1356, (Dist. Court, D Utah, 1998), 1357.
14. See Colin v. Orange Unified School District, 83 F. Supp. 3d 1135, (Dist. Court, CD Calif., 2000), White County High School PRIDE v. White County School District, No. 2:06-CV-29-WCO, (Dist. Court, ND Ga., 2006).
15. American Family Association, "News Release: What a Joke!" [page?]
16. Hilton, "Options for Local School Districts," 17.
17. Caudillo v. Lubbock Independent School District, 311 F. Supp. 2d 550, (Dist. Court, ND Texas, 2004), 560.
18. Ibid., 568.
19. Orman, "'Being Gay in Lubbock,'" 241.
20. Boyd County HS GSA, 673.
21. Ibid., 674
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. ACLU, "ACLU Blasts KY Board of Ed's Decision." [page?]
26. Boyd County HS GSA, 676.
27. Mergens, 239.
28. Boyd County HS GSA, 682–3.
29. Tinker, 508.
30. Boyd County HS GSA, 689.
31. Ibid., 693.
32. US District Court Eastern District of Kentucky Ashland Division, Consent Decree and Order.

33. Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County, 419 F. Supp. 2d 937, (Dist. Court, ED Kentucky, 2006), 940.
34. Ibid., 939.
35. Tinker, 513.
36. Morrison, (2006), 942.
37. Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 US 260, (1988), 272–3.
38. Morrison, (2006), 943.
39. Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County, 507 F.3d 494, (6th Cir., 2007), Sec. IB.
40. Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504 US 555, (1992), 560.
41. Morrison, (2007), Sec. IIIA2a, citing White v. Lee, 227 F.3d 1214 (9th Cir., 2000), National Commodity & Barter Ass'n v. Archer, 31 F.3d 1521 (10th Cir., 1994), and Howard Gault Co. v. Texas Rural Legal Aid, Inc., 848 F.2d 544 (5th Cir., 1988).
42. Morrison, (2007), Sec. IIIB, citing Thaddeus-X v. Blatter, 175 F.3d 378, 394 (6th Cir. 1999).
43. Laird v. Tatum, 408 US 1, (1973), 2–3.
44. Ibid., 13–4.
45. Morrison v. Board of Ed. of Boyd County, 521 F. 3d 602, (6th Cir., 2008), Sec. IIIA.
46. Ibid., Sec. III.
47. Harlow and Probst, "Minnesota school district investigated."
48. Shahid, "'Don't say gay' bill passes."
49. Harlow and Probst, "Minnesota school district investigated." [page?]
50. Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681-8, (1972).
51. US Dept. of Ed., Letter to Colleagues.
52. See Eisenmann, "Protecting the Kids in the Hall;" Mayes, "Confronting Same-Sex, Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment;" and Schaffner, "Approaching the New Millennium with Mixed Blessings."

Bibliography

American Civil Liberties Union. "ACLU Tells School Council It Must Allow Gay-Straight Alliance." news release, September 19, 2002.

American Civil Liberties Union. "ACLU Blasts KY Board of Ed's Decision to Ban All School Clubs Rather Than Allow Gay-Straight Alliance." news release, December 20, 2002.

American Family Association of Pennsylvania. "News Release: What a Joke! USDOE to Investigate Penn State." news release, November 17, 2011.

Board of Education of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, 496 US 226, (1990).

Boyd County High School Gay-Straight Alliance v. Board of Education of Boyd County, 258 F. Supp. 2d 667, (Dist. Court, ED Kentucky, 2003).

Caudillo v. Lubbock Independent School District, 311 F. Supp. 2d 550, (Dist. Court, ND Texas, 2004).

Colin v. Orange Unified School District, 83 F. Supp. 3d 1135, (Dist. Court, CD Calif., 2000).

East High Gay-Straight Alliance v. Board of Education of Salt Lake City, 30 F. Supp. 2d 1356, (Dist. Court, D Utah, 1998).

Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681-8, (1972).

Eisemann, Vanessa H. "Protecting the Kids in the Hall: Using Title IX to Stop Student-on-Student Anti-Gay Harassment." *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*. 15. no. 1 (2000): 125–60. *Equal Access Act,* 20 U.S.C. §4071 (1984).

Harlow, Poppy, and Emily Probst. CNN, "Minnesota school district investigated after civil rights complaint." Last modified July 20, 2011. Accessed December 8, 2011.

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 US 260, (1988).

Hilton, Matthew. "Options for Local School Districts Reviewing Local Governance and Moral Issues Raised by the Equal Access Act: The Gay-Straight Student Alliance in Utah." *Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal*. 1996. no. 1 (1996): 1–33.

Laird v. Tatum, 408 US 1, (1973)

Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife, 504 US 555, (1992).

Mayes, Thomas A. "Confronting Same-Sex, Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment: Recommendations for Educators and Policy Makers." *Fordham Urban Law Journal*. 29. no. 2 (2001-2002): 641–82.

Morrison v. Board of Education of Boyd County, 419 F. Supp. 2d 937, (Dist. Court, ED Kentucky, 2006).

Morrison v. Board of Education of Boyd County, 507 F.3d 494, (6th Cir., 2007).

Morrison v. Board of Education of Boyd County, 521 F. 3d 602, (6th Cir., 2008).

Orman, Sarah. "'Being Gay in Lubbock:' The Equal Access Act in *Caudillo*." Hastings Women's Law Journal. 17. no. 2 (2006): 227–46.

Riener, Alice. "Pride and Prejudice: The First Amendment, the Equal Access Act, and the Legal Fight for Gay Student Groups in High Schools." *American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law*. 14. no. 3 (2006): 613–43.

Schaffner, Joan E. "Approaching the New Millennium with Mixed Blessings for Harassed Gay Students." *Harvard Women's Law Journal*. 22. (1999): 159–206.

Shahid, Aliyah. Daily News, "'Don't say gay' bill passes in Tennessee Senate, would ban teachers from discussing homosexuality." Last modified May 21, 2011. Accessed December 8, 2011.

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 US 503, (1969).

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Letter to Colleagues*, October 26, 2010.

U.S. District Court Eastern District of Kentucky Ashland Division, *Consent Decree and Order,* Civil Action No. 03-CI-17-DLB, February 3, 2004, Published by ACLU, <http://www.aclu.org/files/FilesPDFs/boydconsent.pdf>.

White County High School PRIDE v. White County School District, No. 2:06-CV-29-WCO, (Dist. Court, ND Ga., 2006).

TYLER GUARNERI is part of the College of Engineering's class of 2014. He is studying biomedical engineering. He was raised in beautiful Beacon, New York. This essay was written for Bradley Queen's course, WR 150: The First Amendment.

From the Instructor

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy have resurfaced as the paradigm of social change, as evidenced by the recent "Occupy Movement" and the Arab Spring of 2011. The essence of King's morality and social ethics can be understood through a critical examination of his sermons, speeches, and writings. Accordingly, the writing seminar, which created the occasion for Zoe Strassfield's essay, focused on Dr. King's ethics of hope and love along with his evolving critical thinking on civil disobedience, non-violence, social policy, and the struggle for integration.

In her exciting essay, "A Day of Sputniks and Explorers: Martin Luther King on Science and Technology," Zoe captures the essence of Dr. King's philosophy and its relevance for contemporary society in her unique topic, which raises the question, "How did King view the scientific progress of his time period?"

Through a creative exploration of King's writings, Ms. Strassfield reveals King's relationship to science on many levels. She makes many claims, but she validates them with solid evidence and consistent documentation of sources. Specifically, and to her credit, Strassfield handles multiple sources—demonstrating her ability to gauge the authority and reliability of sources and making critical choices among the materials at her disposal—manages structure and organization of a "longer" essay, and practices acknowledgement and response.

In particular, Strassfield not only identifies Dr. King's essential disavowal of any perceived "conflict between science and religion," as evidenced in his early academic writings, but also recognizes a deliberate intersection of science in King's later professional essays and speeches on civil disobedience, nonviolence, and societal reform. The heart of Strassfield's discussion necessarily focuses on the moral and ethical components of King's philosophy associated with the human use of science and technology. Accordingly, she maintains the relevance of King's ethic of love, moral stance on nonviolence, and hope for societal unity—sisterhood and brotherhood—toward the creation of a more humane and just society for all.

— Mikel Satcher

From the Writer

For the Spring 2012 semester I chose to take WR 150: Rediscovery of an American Hero: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. because I thought being able to study Dr. King while attending the school where he received his degree in theology presented a great and rare opportunity. The course also appealed to me because as a writer I was interested in how words could make a difference, and I knew that Dr. King's words had changed the world.

For our third and final paper, we were asked to choose a topic related to Dr. King's life and work. When our class visited the Martin Luther King, Jr. Reading Room at BU's Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, I was really surprised to see that one of the papers from King's student days that was on display featured him writing about my major, archeology. I really felt a connection to Dr. King knowing that we both thought archeology was cool.

While no essay is ever effortless or easy for me, "A Day of Sputniks and Explorers" allowed me to write about a lot of topics very close to my heart, including space exploration, aviation, public perceptions of science, and social reform. I was surprised by how many little details I'd picked up in my reading for pleasure over the years were usable in the paper: Yuri Gagarin's biography, the history of film adaptations of Frankenstein, a *New Yorker* cartoon. There actually turned out to be a whole lot more material that I considered using but didn't wind up fitting in.

— Zoe Strassfield

Zoe Strassfield

A Day of Sputniks and Explorers: Martin Luther King on Science and Technology

When visiting the Martin Luther King, Jr. Reading Room at the Mugar Memorial Library with my Writing 150 class, I was struck by the content of one of Dr. King's student papers that was on display. The title and subject, "Light on the Old Testament from the Ancient Near East: The Influence of the Mystery Religions on Christianity," seemed perfectly ordinary for a paper by a theology student, but what surprised me was the way in which Dr. King began his paper—by praising the science of archeology for providing "a critical, unbiased, and scientific light" (King 163) with which the accuracy of Biblical sources could be examined. As both an archeology major and someone accustomed to hearing frequently of the "conflict" between science and religion, I welcomed such words. Afterwards, in class, I began to notice references to science and technology in the readings that I was assigned. I became curious—how did King view the scientific progress of his time period?

I had learned much about King's life and beliefs, both in the class I was taking and in school before that, but I had never read anything addressing that question. However, it clearly seemed to be an issue of some importance—if the present is also a time of great scientific and technological change, how should social reformers who seek to follow King's example regard science? Can scientists be allies in the struggle for non-violent change, or is science irrelevant to or even a distraction from this struggle?

By examining the speeches and writings of Dr. King, I aim to show that King saw science as a neutral force that could create either harm or ill depending on who was using it. Science without morality, in King's view,

furthered oppression and led to the creation of deadly weapons. However, when practiced by those who understood the ethic of love, science could be a force for good in the world, improving lives, furthering human understanding of our world, and helping people come together in unity.

As King was not a scientist and mentions of science in his writings usually occur in speeches related to larger social issues, very little has been written about King's attitudes towards science. James Washington's monumental 1986 collection of King's writings, *A Testament of Hope*, contains no listing for "Science" or "Technology" in its twenty-three page Index (Washington 689-702). The subject is mentioned briefly in Fredrik Sunnemark's *Ring Out Freedom! The Voice of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement*, where Sunnemark says that King's mentions of science in speeches "can be divided into two different areas. First, King often points to the conflict between scientific progress and moral values. Second, he refers to academic disciplines, mainly anthropology, biology, psychology and sociology" (Sunnemark 97–98). In "Martin Luther King and the 'Ghost in the Machine,'" Will Fitzgerald states, "Clearly, [King] hoped that high technology could aid the human rights revolution, but he feared it would not," and argues that artificial intelligence researchers in King's day could have benefited from listening to his philosophy of love (3). While the statements in both of these works agree with what my research so far has revealed, neither focuses exclusively on the issue of King's attitudes towards science. Also, while Sunnemark correctly names the academic fields that King "mainly" spoke about, his listing minimalizes other fields, such as physics and engineering, which King also referenced.

King's most frequent references to science occur in the sermons collected into his 1963 book *The Strength to Love*. Given that James Cone and others have said that King must be understood first and foremost as a preacher (Cone 122–123), his sermons would seem to be an excellent place to begin our investigation of King's attitudes towards science. In Washington's introduction to the portions of *The Strength to Love* that are featured in *A Testament of Hope*, he remarks that King "refused the accept the false dichotomy between folk and intellectual preaching" (Washington 491), indicating that King at least believed there was nothing wrong with

mentioning "intellectual" topics such as scientific developments in a sermon. But does King refer to science only to condemn it?

The thirteenth sermon in *The Strength to Love*, "Our God is Able," might at first appear to be anti-science, speaking out against "those who seek to convince us that only man is able" when "the ringing testimony of the Christian faith is that God is able." King states that with the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, "the laboratory began to replace the church, and the scientist became a substitute for the prophet" (King 504). In the present day, according to King, such individuals ask, "Is not God being replaced in the mastery of the cosmic order?" because "man-made spaceships carry cosmonauts through outer space at fantastic speeds" (King 505).

King's use of the word "cosmonauts," a specific term referring to astronauts from the former USSR, is interesting, given that by this time both Soviets and Americans had traveled through space. (The first cosmonaut to travel in space was Yuri Gagarin, in April of 1961. He was followed by astronaut Alan Shepard in May of that year.) The fact that he said "cosmonauts" rather than "astronauts" or "cosmonauts and astronauts" may indicate that King was intending to include indirect criticism of the Soviet Union's official policy of atheism as seen also in an earlier sermon from the same book, "A Knock at Midnight."

However, King addresses the criticisms of "the devotees of the new man-centered religion" with a call to "take a broader look at the universe":

> Will we not discover that our man-made instruments seem barely to be moving in comparison to the movement of the God-created solar system? Think about the fact, for instance, that the Earth is circling the sun so fast that the fastest jet would be left sixty-six thousand miles behind in the first hour of a space race. In the past seven minutes, we have been hurtled more than eight thousand miles through space. Or consider the sun which scientists tell us is the center of the solar system. . . . By this time tomorrow, we shall be 1,600,000 miles from where we are at this hundredth of a second. The sun, which seems to be remarkably near, is 93,000,000 miles from the Earth. Six months from now, we shall be on the opposite side of the

> sun—93,000,000 miles beyond it—and in a year from now we shall have been swung completely around it and back to where we are right now. So when we behold the illimitable expanse of space, in which we are compelled to measure stellar distance in light-years and in which heavenly bodies travel at incredible speeds, we are forced to look beyond man and affirm anew that God is able. (King 505–506)

King's proof of the majesty of God is a succession of scientific facts, all correctly stated. King's complaint, then, is not with science or scientists in and of themselves, but with those who claim that science means humanity has no need for God. King's message is this: "Man is not able to save himself or the world. Unless he is guided by God's spirit, his new-found scientific power will become a devastating Frankenstein monster that will bring to ashes his earthly life" (King 505). Frankenstein's monster, as suggested by the title of an early film version of the story, *Life Without Soul*, is a famous metaphor for science as menace. But when science is "guided by God's spirit," it can be a force for good, such as these astronomical facts that encourage humans to be humble and aware of God's power. In "A Knock at Midnight" King describes how science has freed humanity from "the midnight of crippling ignorance and superstition," and conquered "dread plagues and diseases" (King 497).

In two other sermons from *The Strength to Love*, King describes how science can be an ally in the fight for racial equality. "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart" begins with King stating that ideally all people must be "toughminded" or intellectually fit and capable of skeptically investigating their world, but also "tenderhearted," acting with understanding towards others and practicing the ethic of love. Racism consists of the opposite qualities, the "softmindedness" to believe that people of different races are inferior and the "hardheartedness" to act with violence against them. "Softmindedness," according to King, "is one of the basic causes of racial prejudice. . . . Race prejudice is based on groundless fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings" (King 493). On the other hand, a "toughminded person," such as a scientist, "always examines the facts before he reaches conclusions, in short, he *postjudges*" (italics mine). Social scientists, in fact, are presented by King as examples of toughminded people who have found racism to be wrong based purely on an examination of the facts: "The

toughminded research of anthropologists" reveals that belief in "the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of the Negro race" has no basis in reality (King 494). Racism thus is not only amoral and contrary to religious teaching but also foolish and unscientific. "Love in Action," another sermon collected in *The Strength to Love*, criticizes the idea of "black" or "white" blood as unscientific, reminding listeners that "segregationists refused to acknowledge that science has demonstrated that there are four types of blood and that these four types are to be found within every racial group" (King 43).

Both "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart" and "Love in Action" also deal directly with the idea of a "conflict" between science and religion, which King believed did not exist. In fact, according to King, just as scientists must be guided by religious values to use their knowledge ethically, religious people must have a scientific, questioning worldview in order to understand the problems of the modern world and create rational strategies to fix them. (This theme—a religious leader ill-equipped to deal with the modern technology of the 1960s—is satirized in a contemporary *New Yorker* cartoon by Robert J. Day in which a priest in a large stained-glass church prays, "Give us this day no sonic boom" (Day 1).)

King admits that "softmindedness often invades religion," and that "religion has sometimes rejected new truth with a dogmatic passion" (King 493), as evidenced by the "misinformed" churchmen "who felt that they had an edict from God to withstand the progress of science, whether in the form of a Copernican revolution or a Darwinian theory of natural selection" (King 40). As evidenced by the earlier quote, King himself clearly believed that Copernicus had been correct about the planets orbiting around the sun, and he elsewhere states that while "Social Darwinism" is a human conceit, "the Darwinian theory of evolution is valid in the biological realm" (King 104).

In contrast to "softminded persons" who "have revised the Beatitudes to read, 'Blessed are the poor in ignorance, for they shall see God'" (King 493), King states, "Never must the Church tire of reminding men that they have a moral responsibility to be intelligent," and that "we are commanded to love God, not only with our hearts and souls, but also with our minds" (King 44). Intelligent religious individuals, in King's eyes, would oppose racist claims on both moral and factual grounds.

One paragraph from "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart" sums up King's vision of symbiosis between religion and science:

> [Softmindedness] has also led to a widespread belief that there is a conflict between science and religion. But this is not true. There may be a conflict between softminded religionists and toughminded scientists, but not between science and religion. Their respective worlds are different, and their methods are dissimilar. Science investigates, religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge which is power; religion gives man wisdom which is control. Science deals mainly with facts, religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals. They are complementary. Science keeps religion from sinking into the valley of crippling irrationalism and paralyzing obscurantism. Religion prevents science from falling into the marsh of obsolete materialism and moral nihilism. (King 493)

If King must be understood first and foremost as a preacher and his sermons to be the work closest to his inner thoughts, then these references show that King was knowledgeable about science and technology and believed such knowledge to be important to modern life. To borrow the terms used by King in "A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart," we might say that King demonstrated a toughminded desire to be educated about science relevant to current issues—the astronomy and physics of the space race, anthropological research into the nature of race—together with a tenderhearted commitment that such knowledge should be used for beneficent purposes.

Clearly, King made numerous references to science and technology in his sermons at Ebenezer Baptist Church. In moving out to examine the larger body of King's speeches and writings, we find these references and attitudes repeated elsewhere. When we move beyond the church to examine the very public marches and protests he carried out in the streets, we see that King's movement benefited from the technological advances of the day—television and radio allowed King's message to be carried around the world and revealed the horrors he and his followers faced, modern surgery saved King after the 1958 attempt on his life, and commercial jet aviation

allowed Dr. and Mrs. King to visit India and speak firsthand with Gandhi's followers (King 25).

However, King also saw the continued development of more powerful weapons technology—especially nuclear bombs and missiles—as making nonviolence more direly needed than ever before. King's 1958 account of the Montgomery bus boycott, *Stride Toward Freedom* (excerpted in the later collection *A Testament of Hope*), ends with this observation:

> In a day when Sputniks and Explorers dash through outer space and guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, nobody can win a war. Today the choice is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence. (King 490)

Here, we again see King's awareness of current scientific developments. Instead of talking generically about *satellites* dashing through outer space, he refers to the Soviet *Sputnik 1* and American *Explorer 1* satellites, both launched shortly before the book's publication, by name. King also warned of the misuse of science and technology by segregationists to further oppression, such as the design of urban rapid-transit systems that ignored black neighborhoods (King 325–326) and the claims of southern anthropologists of "proof" of racial superiority (King 358).

But, according to King, science was also an arena in which minorities could make great contributions and thus put the lie to outside claims of their "inferiority." In a 1961 commencement address at Lincoln University, King reminded his audience that "being a Jew did not stop Einstein from using his genius-packed mind to prove his theory of relativity" and that "from humble, crippling circumstances, George Washington Carver rose up and carved for himself an imperishable niche in the annals of science" (King 212). Other scientists mentioned by name in this same speech were the "great anthropologists" Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Melville Herskovits, who, in contrast to the "utterly ignorant claims" of white supremacists, "made it clear through scientific evidence that there are no superior races and there are no inferior races" (King 211).

As mentioned above, King made occasional references to the developments in spaceflight that were occurring contemporaneously with his campaigns. At the time, many complaints were raised that the space

program was a waste and a distraction when the United States faced serious social problems, perhaps most famously in Gil Scott-Heron's poem, "Whitey on the Moon": "I can't pay no doctor bill. / (but Whitey's on the moon)" (Madrigal 1). Given that similar debates continue to this day, we should be understandably curious as to Dr. King's stance on the space program.

In his final presidential address to the Southern Christian Leadership Council, King states:

> John Kenneth Galbraith said that a guaranteed national income could be done for about twenty billion dollars a year. And I say to you today, that if our nation can spend thirty-five billion dollars to fight an unjust, evil war in Vietnam, and twenty billion dollars to put a man on the moon, it can spend billions of dollars to put God's children on their own two feet right here on Earth. (King 248)

Clearly, King believes that the government should spend money helping to relieve poverty. However, it is interesting that he mentions the moon program second, after the Vietnam War, suggesting that he considered the war to be a larger waste. The war is described as "unjust" and "evil," while no adjective, negative or positive, is given to the space program.

This "Vietnam first, moon second" pattern is also seen in the only other mention of the space program by King included in *A Testament of Hope*. In a 1968 interview with Rabbi Everett Gendler, Gendler asks King's opinion of, among other things "the power structure, the establishment finding funds for supersonic transports, moon projects, technological developments which are mere luxuries, for Vietnam, but not for those pressing needs which effect millions here at home" (King 671).

King's response goes on for nearly four pages and addresses this last point only at the very end of that space:

> We feel that there must be some structural changes now, there must be a radical re-ordering of priorities, there must be a de-escalation and a final stopping of the war in Vietnam and an escalation of the war against poverty and racism here at home. . . . One of the great tragedies of the war in Vietnam is that it has strengthened the military-

> industrial complex, and it must be made clear now that there are some programs that we can cut back on—the space program and certainly the war in Vietnam—and get on with this program of a war on poverty. (King 675)

Again, there is the suggestion that while funding used for the space program should be used to help relieve social problems, Vietnam is a larger and more heinous waste. King made numerous speeches opposing the war in Vietnam but seems to have mentioned the space program on only these two occasions. Clearly, stopping the war seemed to be of greater importance to King. After all, according to the figures he cites in his address to the SCLC, the government could provide a guaranteed national income almost twice over for what it spent in Vietnam without touching the space program.

It should also be noted that King does not comment on Gendler's mention of "supersonic transports" or other "technological developments which are mere luxuries." Given King's belief that science guided by morality could benefit humankind, he probably did not agree with the blanket statement that all technological developments were "mere luxuries." So long as the government was spending an appropriate amount of money and effort to relieve poverty, there was no harm in King's eyes in *also* pursuing research designed to help improve life. The "supersonic transports" mentioned by Gendler were attempts to create an American counterpart to the Anglo-French *Concorde* supersonic airliner that was at the time under construction (Rosenbloom 403–423).

Air transportation was a technology King had earlier spoken favorably of on numerous occasions. King traveled frequently by airplane as part of his civil rights work and used an airplane flight as a metaphor for his movement in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, stating that while he may have been one of the movement's "pilots," its "successful journey" would not have been possible without the "ground crew" of all of his marchers, organizers, and associates (King 225). He described air travel as having made it clear that "no individual or nation can live alone" because the world was now "geographically one," a place where it was possible to "eat breakfast in New York City and dinner in Paris, France." "Through our scientific genius," King said, "we have made of the world a neighborhood; now through our moral and spiritual genius, we must make of it a brother-

hood." The airplane and its impact on the world thus challenged people to "rise above the narrow confines of our individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity" (King 138).

King thus considered air travel to be a positive technology that encouraged world unity, unlike space travel, an outgrowth of missile technology—and thus part of "the military-industrial complex"—that seemed to have little practical benefit to humankind. If King had lived a few months or years longer, however, he might have had reason to think differently. In the years following the moon landing, space experiments with applications to life on Earth became a larger priority for the space program, leading to advancements in medicine, agriculture, and countless other fields (Jones 1). Treaties were signed restricting the scope of military activities in space, and cooperation between nations on space projects increased, turning the world of "Sputniks and Explorers" that King had feared were signs of the increasing threat of "nonexistence" into an arena for nonviolence. In 1975, seven years after King's death, the joint Soviet-American crew of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project visited his grave in Atlanta.

It was images sent back by astronauts in lunar orbit the Christmas after King's assassination that inspired poet Archibald McLeish to pen a *New York Times* editorial very much in line with King's comments about the combination of scientific and spiritual genius:

> The medieval notion of the earth put man at the center of everything. The nuclear notion of the earth put him nowhere—beyond the range of reason even—lost in absurdity and war. This latest notion may have other consequences. Formed as it was in the minds of heroic voyagers who were also men, it may remake our image of mankind. No longer that preposterous figure at the center, no longer that degraded and degrading victim off at the margins of reality and blind with blood, man may at last become himself.
>
> To see the earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers

> on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold—brothers
> who know now they are truly brothers. (MacLeish 1)

These words are a true demonstration of King's vision of what science could be in the hands of those who were spiritually guided—a motivation to unity, an aid in making the world both a neighborhood and a brotherhood, and a rejection of a life that was "lost in absurdity and war."

Works Cited

Cone, James H. "We Must Love Our White Brothers." *Martin & Malcolm & America.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991. 120–150. Print.

Day, Robert J. "Give us this day no sonic boom." *The New Yorker.* 27 January 1968. Print.

Fitzgerald, Will. "Martin Luther King and the 'Ghost in the Machine.'" *International Journal of Cognition and Technology*. 2.1 (2003): n. page. Web. 19 Apr. 2012.

Jones, John. "About Spinoff." National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 1 May 2011. Web. 25 Apr 2012. <http://spinoff.nasa.gov/spinhist.html>.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "The American Dream." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 208–216. Print.

---. "Conversation with Martin Luther King." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 657–679. Print.

---. "Facing the Challenge of a New Age." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 135–144. Print.

---. "Light on the Old Testament from the Ancient Near East: The Influence of the Mystery Religions on Christianity." *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Volume I: Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951.* Ed. Clayborne Carson, Ralph E. Luker, Penny A. Russell. U California P., 1992. 162–180.

---. "Love in Action." *The Strength to Love*. Cleveland: Fortress Press, 1981. 36–46. Print.

---. "My Trip to the Land of Gandhi." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 23–30. Print.

---. "Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 224–226. Print.

---. "*Playboy* Interview: Martin Luther King, Jr." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 340–377. Print.

---. "The Strength to Love." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 491–517. Print.

---. "Stride Toward Freedom." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 417–490. Print.

---. "A Testament of Hope." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 313–328. Print.

---. "Where Do We Go From Here?" *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James M. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 245–252. Print.

MacLeish, Archibald M. "A Reflection: Riders on Earth Together, Brothers in Eternal Cold." *New York Times* ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2008), Dec 25 1968. Web. 18 Apr. 2012.

Madrigal, Alexis. "Gil Scott-Heron's Poem, 'Whitey on the Moon'" *The Atlantic*, 28 May 2011. Web. 14 Aug. 2012.

Rosenbloom, Joshua. "The Politics of the American SST Programme: Origin, Opposition and Termination." *Social Studies of Science*. 11.4 (1981): 403–423. Print.

Sunnemark, Fredrik. *Ring Out Freedom!: The Voice of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004. 97–98. Print.

Washington, James M. Introduction to "The Strength to Love." A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. Ed. Washington. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. 491–517. Print.

ZOE STRASSFIELD, a member of the Class of 2015, is currently preparing for her sophomore year at Boston University. A native of Southampton, New York, she is majoring in archeology in CAS and hopes to take part in a field school in her junior year. She is a member of the BU Astronomical Society, the BU Quidditch Team, and the BU chapters of Students for the Exploration and Development of Space and the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics. This essay was written for Mikel Satcher's course, WR 150: The Essential Writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rediscovery of an American Hero.

Honorable Mentions

WR 150 Essays

Defining a Demoness's Deliverance: Self Deception and Inez Serrano's Role in *No Exit*

Alex Delmonaco

Terror and the Media: Attacks Aboard Public Transport

David Lavieri

The Fourth Branch of Lincoln's Government

Sergio Reyes

Up and Down Under: Identity in *Up and Down*

James Sundquist