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WR 150 Essays

Editor's Note

Here is the question that motivates me to write: Why would anyone want to read a bunch of papers written by undergraduates in a required introductory writing class? In Writing Program classes students learn fundamental skills that help prepare them to satisfy any given professor's expectations for any given college paper assignment. Admittedly, that very tall order does not necessarily sound like the recipe for a great read. As Writing Program students begin to learn *how* academics write, however, they also begin to understand *why* academics write. At some magical moment, students stop approaching papers simply as assignments—writing them the way they think their professors want them written—and begin instead to think of them as projects, their own projects, projects that offer an opportunity to say something that needs to be said.

Therefore, the criteria we editors kept foremost in mind as we read, discussed, and evaluated the more than 500 excellent papers submitted this year to *WR* were: Does this paper engage authentic questions in terms that make readers care about them? Does the paper communicate ideas that are relevant beyond the four walls of the class for which it was composed? The papers selected for Issue 5 clear these high bars with exceptional grace. They illustrate the range and flexibility of the Writing Program curriculum as well as the range and flexibility of some of our most remarkable students.

From WR 097 through WR 150, Writing Program classes acculturate students to the place of writing in the life of the university. The need for such acculturation is apparent for BU's growing population of interna-

tional students. The papers from ESL courses (WR 097 and 098) selected for publication in Issue 5 show not only an impressive command of English but also a lively awareness of what makes a college essay tick. Yiyang Chen makes a compelling argument about the use of hypotheticals in philosophical reasoning, an argument that would not be possible without the insight wrought through critical reading. Danyang Li demonstrates not only her ability to offer a sensitive ethical interpretation of a novel but also her understanding of conventions of argumentative writing, some of which are culturally specific to the Western or American university.

Though it may not be as obvious, students placing directly into WR 100—most but not all of whom are native English speakers—also undergo acculturation of a sort. They too learn what college writing is and how it differs in form and ethos from the kinds of writing they have been asked to do previously. The authors of the WR 100 papers selected for publication write, as far more experienced scholars do, in order to take on complex conceptual problems and shed light on some small, carefully defined part of the world. Narula Navraj challenges the critical consensus on the meaning of epiphany in the work of James Joyce. And in "Down the Street and Around the World," her essay on the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Katie Griswold offers a nuanced and historically informed exploration of the museum's idiosyncratic organization.

WR 150, which integrates instruction in writing and research, offers students a fuller context for understanding why academics write. While most students begin research looking for answers, in WR 150 they figure out that research can also help them define authentic questions that they are then compelled to try to answer. Sabrina Patrizio discovered scholarship on Richard Yates's midcentury novel *Revolutionary Road* to be scarce, which inspired her to fill this gap in "Wouldn't You Like to Be Loved by April Wheeler." Ryan Chernin moves an emerging scholarly conversation forward by proposing a literary antecedent for the HBO series *The Wire*. Levi Mastrangelo answers a question raised by Mark Twain about the durability of Jewish culture through analysis of a contemporary novel and film. And Lisa Lau addresses questions raised by earlier thinkers about what constitutes national history in her analysis of recent Egyptian political street murals.

There is, of course, a strong correspondence between why academics write and why other professional writers do. For this reason, some Writing Program instructors have begun to offer an "alternative genre" assignment in WR 100 or 150, inviting students to write for another purpose and audience. For the first time in Issue 5, three such alternative projects have met the same high standards as the best academic papers, and we are delighted to present them as a reflection of another dimension of our program. In "Serotonin Keeps You Sad and Sleepy," Jane McClenathan takes on a science journalist's challenge to communicate new neuroscience research to laypeople. Yash Soni writes as an environmental advocate testifying before the EPA about fracking. And Robert Pressel introduces an (imaginary) edited collection of speeches to prepare readers to appreciate their relationship to one another and their significance to American culture. I have a fresh appreciation for the rhetorical demands of this last task in particular because it has so much in common with the one I face in composing this editor's note.

What these diverse essays share is their writers' palpable and purposeful desire to communicate ideas they have discovered. Peruse this issue and you will probably become interested in something you had never thought about before. Read cover to cover and you will certainly learn something that inspires or provokes you.

— Sarah Madsen Hardy, Editor

From the Instructor

Danyang Li's "Justice for the Mother" presents a strong example of the final essay for WR 097, an argument-based analysis of a theme identified in the novel *Montana 1948*. This is the first full-length work that students at this level are expected to discuss in terms of both content and stylistics, and the challenge is both linguistic and cultural: the story is set in post-World War II Montana, with the idiosyncrasies of small-town America predictably foreign to ESL students.

Danyang manages to enter the world of the characters at that time, unravel the subtle interactions caused by a moral dilemma, and discover universal messages that give validity to her argument. The good balance between plot summary and nuanced analysis is a major achievement, along with a near-native-like command of the language in its idiomatic phrasing.

— Maria Zlateva

WR 097: English Grammar and Composition

From the Writer

My paper, "Justice for the Mother," was an essay that centered around one of the main characters in the novel *Montana 1948*, written by Larry Watson. In my essay, I started with my thesis statement and a brief introduction of the book.

For me, one of the novel's most intriguing perspectives was the portrayal of David's mother, Gail. She is not only a unique character in the story who fights for justice without hesitation, but also she has a drastic change in her beliefs—from "justice fighter" to her role as a mother. Throughout the process of writing this paper, I found myself really like the character I was writing about because I found so many similarities between the character Gail and myself. Thinking from the position of Gail, I could easily understand why Gail made all the choices, and I certainly believed I would act the same way given a similar situation.

However, writing this essay was not easy for me. I experienced a lot of problems when I first began this paper. One of the main issues I had was the structure of the essay. I was not sure about how much I should write on each section of my essay, and whether I should focus more on the summary of the novel. I asked both my professor and the tutor in the writing center, and they helped me greatly. Another problem I had to face was the conclusion. I did not know how to end the essay, but luckily my professor gave me a lot of advice.

I am really glad that I got the chance to write an essay about such an interesting character and a wonderful novel. However, writing this essay was definitely not an easy task. I had to overcome a lot of difficulties but with the help from my professor and the tutors in the writing center, I was able to produce this well-rounded essay.

— Danyang Li

Danyang Li

Prize Essay Winner

Justice for the Mother

Larry Watson, in *Montana 1948*, presents a story of a family that tries to choose between saving their reputation and preserving morality. Watson makes an intriguing claim that practicing justice can be hard because of the different roles each individual has to accept. This difficulty is evident in Watson's portrayal of Gail, who is the mother in the family and always encourages positive behavior. Though Gail courageously advocates for justice, as the story develops, she surrenders in the end due to the increasing pressure that is threatening her family. In my perspective, this unexpected change in Gail demonstrates that her role of being a mother outweighs her desire of doing justice.

Montana 1948 is a story told by a fictional character David Hayden, a twelve-year-old boy who lives with his family in a small town of Montana where David's father, Wesley, works as the sheriff. The conflict explodes when their Indian maid Marie suddenly gets ill but refuses to see Doctor Frank, who is Wesley's brother. Gail, Wesley's wife, shockingly discovers Frank frequently molests and even rapes Indian girls. Subsequently, Marie is murdered by Frank, according to David, and Wesley falls into a dilemma between justice and family. At this stage, Gail supports justice and wants punishment for Frank. However, Wesley's father Julian, the former sheriff, regards Frank's crime as insignificant and demands that Wesley should leave his brother alone. The story goes to a peak when Wesley locks Frank in his basement and Julian stealthily tries to save Frank by threatening violence. An invisible war begins in the Haydens' backyard. Despite her earlier position, Gail surrenders and asks to free Frank to restore peace in her family. Finally, Wesley realizes his duty and enforces justice. However,

the story ends up with Frank's suicide in the basement and everything is concealed after his death.

From the perspective of characterization, Gail is able to encourage justice in the first parts of the story because of her desire to do right. In her point of view, everyone has the responsibility to do and to uphold justice. When Gail first hears the crime which Frank commits (Watson 37), she is shocked and responds with a tremendous amount of anger towards Wesley, for he tries to avoid confronting the reality. Although Gail does not have the power to give punishment, her persistence on doing justice becomes a tremendous pressure on Wesley's decision. When Wesley comes to an agreement with Frank to "cut things out" (75), Gail urges, "Sins—crimes—are not supposed to go unpunished" (76), and this belief arouses Wesley to act impartially in the end.

With regards to Gail's family role, Gail surrenders to the crime in the end due to her anxiety about the potential violence that could threaten her family's safety. During the gunshot incident in scene three, Gail's desire to protect her family overcomes her clumsiness and enables her to audaciously pull the trigger (130). However, regardless of the bravery she shows, Gail still is the mother in her family. Her priority is, and always will be to keep her family safe. Therefore, when Gail realizes later that her "only" solution to keep her family safe is to abandon justice, she finally breaks down and shouts "Let him [Frank] go. Let him do whatever he wants to do to whomever he wants. I don't care anymore. I just want my house back. I want my family safe" (137). At this point, the burden that Gail has to bear becomes too much for her to carry—guarding family safety, fighting for justice, and being the role model of David—she simply cannot act all of these roles at the same time. Thus, as a mother, she has to choose what is the most important for her, that is, the safety of her family.

Theoretically speaking, I believe there is no right or wrong in how Gail acts. Gail accepts her different roles in various cases—either do justice or preserve her family. As a female myself, I can understand why Gail does not choose justice in the end. It is by no means to say that we are weaker than men, but we have our own perspective of what we ought to value. I cannot imagine any mother under any circumstances would not want her child and her family to be safe, even if it means to give up her dignity and morality. Traditionally, in 1948, women are still a vulnerable group, but as

a female, Gail values justice more than any of the male characters in the story. Therefore, it is ironic to see the constant comparison between Gail, who starts as a strong hearted justice fighter, and Wesley, who has a strong power in his position to preserve justice, but at first, chooses to indulge his brother Frank's crime. Gail's unforeseen change in this story implies that her sense of justice dominates if her family is not threatened, but her family values take precedence over justice when her family is in danger. Essentially, Gail's intrinsic values force her to be true to the mother role.

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DANYANG LI is a sophomore majoring in Business Administration and Management in the school of management (SMG). She is from the great city of Hangzhou, China. And she would like to partially dedicate the publication of this paper to her wonderful first-semester writing professor Maria Zlateva. Professor Zlateva was extremely helpful to her and helped greatly with her grammatical weaknesses.

From the Instructor

Yiyang Chen wrote "Altruism in Hypothetical and Statistical Situations" in Spring 2013 for the second major assignment, a comparative analysis, for WR 098. For this assignment, students analyze aspects of similarity and/or difference in any two texts from our set readings; the assignment requires an interesting, not obvious claim, a demonstration of critical reading and a purposeful structure suitable to the type of comparison made. These aims are well demonstrated in Yiyang's final draft, which compares two discussions of altruism: Garrett Hardin's "Lifeboat Ethics" and Peter Singer's "The Singer Solution to World Poverty."

What cannot be seen from this final version is the process Yiyang went through to arrive at this critical and insightful analysis. Initially, the thesis was a statement of what the essay would achieve: an analysis of the two texts. However, through self and peer revision, Yiyang was able to identify the claim she had implied but not yet specified: inaccuracies can lead readers to false conclusions. A particular strength of her claim, and the essay as a whole, is that it not only demonstrates her strengths as a critical reader, but also that it discusses the importance of critical reading. Additionally, through revision, Yiyang was able to develop a strong structure which allowed her to present her ideas more clearly and effectively. The concept of a naysayer was introduced in the course at the same time this piece was in development; Yiyang was able to apply that concept effectively to demonstrate her development as a thinker and a writer within a broader conversation. Her work contributes not only to discussions of altruism, but also to discussions of the importance of critical reading.

— Jennifer Sia

WR 098: Introduction to College Reading and Writing in English

From the Writer

The idea for my paper, "Altruism in Hypothetical and Statistical Situations," originated from one of my reading journals. In this reading journal, I identified that Hardin's and Singer's essays are similar in that both discuss the ethical issue of altruism by constructing hypothetical situations that can be applied to real-life situations, but they are very different in their perspectives of the act of altruism. This observation inspired me to examine the practicality of the examples constructed in their essays. To have a more comprehensive analysis, I inspected their use of statistics and found the potential issues I could work with.

During my writing process, I had a problem in separating the main ideas into points of suitable length. My professor suggested that I divide my main ideas into two larger points, hypothetical examples and statistical data, and then divide each larger point into two smaller points. After confirming the structure for the essay, I added a naysayer to each point. In the first few drafts of my essay, my discussion was not explicit enough. I revised by introducing the metaphors and hypothetical scenarios mentioned by the two articles more specifically, refining my topic sentences, and adding more connections between sentences. In this way, I finally made my essay clearer and more concise.

— Yiyang Chen

Yiyang Chen

Altruism in Hypothetical and Statistical Situations

The ethical issue of altruism has been a question of debate among philosophers for many decades. Considering the abstract nature of the concepts, debaters frequently explain them in more intimate and specific situations, either to illuminate the concepts or to evoke responses from the audience. In "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case against Helping the Poor," Hardin employs the metaphor of a lifeboat to illustrate the potentially destructive consequence of unlimited foreign aid, as to oppose the act of altruism; in "The Singer Solution to World Poverty," Singer creates two hypothetical scenarios to inspire the audience to contemplate their responsibilities in helping third world children. At first glance, the audience might say that they are distinctly different in their views of altruism, but a closer inspection of both imaginary situations reveals a distorted reality that will give the audience affected views on the issue. The usage of hypothetical scenarios and statistics in both texts involves the problems of misrepresentation and oversimplification of actuality, which can cause the audience to exclude some possible resolutions in facing ethical dilemmas. The inaccuracies of the evidence of both essays will likely cause readers to reach false conclusions regarding the authors' suggested solutions.

The first problem associated with the constructed examples is the inaccurate representation of reality caused by the use of extreme cases. In the description of the relationship between rich and poor nations, Hardin depicts the scene in which a "lifeboat" representing the rich nation is surrounded by the ocean where the poor nations swim (149). The lifeboat has a certain capacity that cannot be exceeded. Otherwise, "The boat swamps, everyone drowns" (149). By using this metaphor, Hardin highlights the

potentially catastrophic consequence of helping the poor countries and makes the audience contemplate the pragmatic implications behind the act of altruism, such as it adds great pressure on human survival and the environment (156). However, this metaphor is not a truthful reflection of reality as it over-states the negative consequence of foreign aid. The audience would probably question whether helping the poor countries in the real world is really as dangerous as the author describes. Few people would believe that aiding poor countries will result in such disastrous consequences as a result of lack of real life evidence. The author commits a logical fallacy here by equivocating the extreme case with the real world one. Thereby, this "lifeboat" metaphor distorts the real world situation by over-exaggerating the negative consequence of foreign aid.

Similarly, in "The Singer Solution to World Poverty," Singer misrepresents reality when he creates two extreme hypothetical situations in which a person confronts a moral dilemma in choosing either to save a child or to sacrifice his or her interests. In the second hypothetical scenario proposed by Singer, the character Bob faces the choice of either switching the railroad to save a child but letting the train destroy most of his savings, or watching the child die but conserving his savings. In this case, most people will criticize Bob for not saving the child (298). Singer argues that because there is no significantly distinguishable line between the hypothetical situation and the real life issue of donating money to third world children, rich people are also morally obligated to give their money to charitable organizations (299). According to Singer, "it is hard to deny that it is also wrong not to send money to one of the organizations listed above. Unless, that is, there is some morally important difference between the two situations that [he has] overlooked" (299). In fact, he indeed overlooks the fundamental differences between the imaginary situation and the real life situation. Just like the metaphor used in Hardin's essays, this scenario created by Singer is also an unusual case that people are unlikely to encounter in real life. Considering the length of response time given in the second hypothetical scenario, we can discover that Bob is required to react to an urgent event. This is to say, his action is more likely to be a result of human instinct instead of thoughtful decision. The audience might imagine themselves saving the child on the railroad but stop at donating more than their fair share, as human intuitions can be different from thoughtful decisions

made in reality. Therefore, the simulation may not work as Singer expects because the framework constrains the audience to think about the circumstance as being different from reality.

The second shared problem is the oversimplification of how the real world operates through using constructed examples to simulate reality, which results in partial conclusions from the audience. Hardin describes the world with the metaphor of a "lifeboat." He simplifies the current world state by putting all the entire world's countries under two circumstances: rich countries are inside the lifeboat while poor countries are swimming in the sea (297). However, the relationships among nations are much more complex in reality. It is improbable that the rich nations isolate themselves from the poor nations in a world that is not polarized and that has become more interdependent under the tide of globalization. Moreover, the assumption that poor countries are swimming in the sea is not appropriate. Although most African countries are underdeveloped; they possess abundant amounts of natural resources. With technological help from the developed countries, they can make more efficient utilization of those resources to create a "lifeboat" of their own.

Likewise, Singer's constructed scenarios are oversimplified in the sense that he disregards the practicality of his solutions in real life. In Singer's hypothetical example mentioned above, choosing to save the child means giving up most of a person's savings. Considering Singer's suggestion in terms of Hardin's lifeboat metaphor, we can see how ineffective Singer's idea is. According to Hardin, a lifeboat with a capacity of 60 can only board 50 people to ensure the safety of people inside the boat (150). If people abdicate their excess savings, they will lose their "safety factor" and become part of the poor who then need help. Therefore, it is impractical to donate all of one's savings, as Singer proposes.

Another similarity is that both essays use one-sided statistics to prove their points, which can lead to the audience's misconception about the issue. In "Lifeboat Ethics," Hardin explains the limited capacity of the lifeboat by assigning numerical values to the supply and demand of resources. He assumes that the lifeboat has a capacity of 60 and saving all the poor people is similar to "making a total of 150 in a boat designed for 60," which will make the boat sink (149). This point can be rebutted by the statistics in Singer's essay. As Singer mentions in his article, the

United States government spends 0.09 percent of gross domestic products on overseas aid, which is far below "the United Nations-recommended target of 0.7 percent" (302). This shows it is unlikely that rich countries will help poor countries beyond their own financial capabilities, which is contrary to Hardin's metaphorical situation in which rich countries give unlimited foreign aid to poor countries. Just like Hardin, Singer also gives one-sided statistics in his article. Although the United States' foreign aid is not a high percentage of its overall GDP, the absolute value is the highest among all countries in the world. When looking at the other side of the statistics, Singer's claim about America's insufficient commitment in foreign aid is no longer valid. Both authors have chosen statistics that favor their points; as a result, their evidence is not substantial and comprehensive enough to reach a fair and promising resolution. From the above analysis, we can see that drawing conclusions from one-sided statistics is not rigorous and can result in partial judgment. However, people who hold opposite views will probably argue that Singer's estimation gives the audience a range of the amount of efforts they need to pay in helping third world children. Nevertheless, those numbers are misrepresentations of reality. Theoretically, they are derived correctly; pragmatically, they may not be feasible when applied to reality.

Moreover, both essays have manipulated the data in a simple way that excludes the subtle and complicated implications of other non-negligible factors that can influence the data. In "Lifeboat Ethics," Hardin calculates the population growth rate of developed countries and developing countries. According to Hardin, the American population doubles every 87 years, while the population outside the lifeboat doubles every 21 years. After 87 years, "each American would have to share the available resources with more than eight people" if they adopt the idea of sharing their resources equally with the poor (151). This idea is similar to Malthus' population theory; one factor that has been overlooked by Hardin is the development of the third world country over time. The economic growth rate of African countries is around 5% in recent years. Through innovating their agricultural technology, they may become self-sufficient after 87 years. Thus, the scarring future highlighted by Hardin's calculation is an inaccurate prediction of reality. Comparatively, Singer's estimation that donating $200 can save a child in the third world country (299) is overly

optimistic. What the audience should notice is that this solution does solve the root problem of the poverty issue. As Hardin mentions in his essay, "as an ancient Chinese proverb goes 'Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach them how to fish and he will eat for the rest of his days'" (155). Simply donating money to meet the basic financial needs of some third world children is not a sustainable resolution to the issue. Instead, the donors need to put their money in the right channels, such as in education and technological development, to make their aid meaningful in the long term. At this point, I would like to raise an objection that Hardin's statistics are persuasive as population growth indeed adds much pressure on the world's resources. However, refusing to help poor countries cannot lessen the problem. The reproduction rate in the underdeveloped countries may become higher due to the lack of awareness and the need for more labor force. Moreover, the spread of disease resulting from poverty may influence the entire human population. Thus, the two essays both overlook the implications behind the statistics as a result of dismissing other determining factors in their interpretations of data.

Nevertheless, some readers may insist that the metaphor employed by Hardin and the hypothetical situations created by Singer are still dissimilar in their appropriateness, as the "lifeboat" metaphor in fact does not exaggerate the severity of the problem; instead, it highlights the importance of survival in the real world. Other people may disagree with me by noting that discussing abstract problems in more specific hypothetical situations simplifies the complex relationship between objects, hence allowing the audience to pass judgments that they would otherwise not make in real life. However, thinking inside the framework offed by the two authors eliminates other possible perspectives and solutions to the issue, such as technological help and more advanced education. Since we are not facing a single-choice question in the act of altruism, the answers can be open to more possibilities. Thus, although the two essays offer opposing views, both have employed constructed examples that involve overstatement and oversimplification susceptible to partial and monotonous conclusions.

Admittedly, these two essays are notably different in their views towards the issue of altruism; however, they are similar in the way that the use of examples and evidence in both essays is selective and misrepresentative, which can lead the audience to biased conclusions. With a meticulous

analysis of the imaginary examples, we can find the rhetorical and statistical weaknesses hidden in the situations constructed by the two authors. This allows readers to distinguish the implications behind the literary strategies and statistics employed by the authors, helping them to avoid being misguided by rhetorical, evidential, and logical tricks. As the issue of altruism has profound significance for human survival, it is important for us to look at the issue from a panoramic view. Only with a more comprehensive understanding of the issue can we make wise and intelligent choices in facing ethical predicaments in real life.

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YIYANG CHEN is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences, majoring in Economics and Mathematics. She is one of the founders and the president of the Boston University Chinese Music Ensemble. She would like to partially dedicate the publication of this paper to her writing professor, Jennifer Sia, who has given her a lot of valuable advice on writing.

From the Instructor

Katie Griswold's essay "Down the Street and Around the World: An Exploration of Everyday Exoticism in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum" was written in the fall of 2012 for a WR 100 seminar focusing on the history of travel writing in the West. It was submitted for the first assignment in the course, in which I asked my students to visit the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and use their close readings of that space to help them evaluate an ongoing scholarly conversation about the historical relationship between "wonder cabinets" and museums. Katie's detailed and thoughtful observations during her time at the ISG led her to employ uncanniness as a critical optics for conceptualizing this relationship anew. Katie's essay, reproduced here, not only met the expectations of my assignment in exemplary fashion, but it also contributes quite significantly to an ongoing scholarly conversation revolving around the perception and display of otherness in our contemporary culture.

— Daniel Hutchins

WR 100: Travel Writing: Genre, History, and Politics

From the Writer

My original assignment was to visit the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum and relate it to two scholarly articles I received in class. I predicted I would be disappointed with such specific parameters, but my expectations were blown away when I entered the museum. The sheer number of rooms was astonishing, and each room's contents were increasingly intriguing. I got lost in painted ceilings and ancient statues for most of that day. I scribbled down my first and second impressions of each room, and took note of which objects drew most visitors' attention. Gallery attendants divulged interesting background information, which I also wrote down. Once my notes were completed, I remember thinking I had looked at everything in the museum but had still seen only a tiny part of what it was.

My essay became an attempt to look further into the true nature of the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum. Rather than wandering in halls, I wandered with my mind. I compared the mystery of the Gardner museum to more clearly organized collections I had seen and to the chaotic wonder cabinets in my secondary source material. A conversation with a classmate yielded more insights and alternate perspectives. Did our discussions bring us to an understanding of the Gardner museum, or only to deeper questions? I toyed around with my fragmented ideas and tried to string them into a cohesive argument about the nature of ordered collections. I glued my thoughts together as I wrote, and allowed the paper to be more free-form and visually based than my usual style. Like a wonder cabinet, this final paper is clear in some ways and disorganized in others. My hope is that my essay inspires readers to take a second look at local museums and find something extraordinary in everyday surroundings.

— Katie Griswold

Katie Griswold

Prize Essay Winner

Down the Street and Around the World: an Exploration of Everyday Exoticism in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Stepping into the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum is like entering a foreign country. It is a space immediately familiar, composed of recognizable objects from periods in history and culture, yet it is also entirely unknown. In here, the institutions of chronology and geography are thrown aside in favor of Idea, of Mood, of Statement. In the Spanish Cloister of the Old Palace entrance, Buddha sits across from the Virgin Mary, who stands next to the naked torso of some Grecian hero, while African panels and Mexican tiles serve as an intricate backdrop. In the same room, a Moorish-style archway carved in stone frames the enormous *El Jaleo*, a painting by John Singer Sargent. The title translates to *The Ruckus*, which I first assumed must be a reference to the intersection of so many cultures and timeframes in one space. But somehow, eclectic as it is, the entranceway feels impeccably composed and soothing. The objects in the shadows never overcrowd the eye, and the collision of cultures only serves to emphasize their common stylistic details. Instead of chaos, I see order and peace.

This must be the result of Gardner's careful design of the building itself and her deliberate selection and placement of every object on display. Though she passed away almost 90 years ago, her museum is precisely the way she left it and must remain so in order to remain open, according to her will. As such, the museum not only pays homage to "the intermingling of cultures across continents," but also honors the particular artistic lens through which one woman viewed her planet (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum). It suggests that Gardner thought things were imbued with

meaning not only because of what they are, but also where they are and who they are with.

Gardner's unique vision was probably inspired by her unusual life for a woman of her time. She was born in New York City on April 14, 1840. She met her husband, John Lowell Gardner, Jr., while she attended private school. They later moved to his hometown of Boston, Massachusetts. The two shared a love of travel and cultivated friendships across the world. Gardner herself had a great passion for the arts and formed close bonds with renowned artists including John Singer Sargent, Okakura Kakuzo, and Francis Marion Crawford. The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum was then founded out of the collection of more than 2,500 pieces artwork she acquired in her lifetime. The building mixes "paintings, furniture, textiles, and objects from different cultures and periods among well-known European paintings and sculpture" with the intention to create a unique and intimate experience for all visitors who come there (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum).

The museum is not only atypical in its layout, but is also unusual in its manner of educating visitors. Although we can read brief descriptions about the major themes and pieces in each room of the house, many smaller objects are left unlabeled and require the help of a museum guide for identification. Much of the time, visitors are left to create their own interpretations about the intentions of Gardner's organization. Does her design breathe familiarity into foreign ideas or add a layer of mystery to our own culture?

The strange organization of the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum reflects larger questions about the cultural purposes of collections discussed by Steven Mullaney, author of "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance," and countered by Amy Boesky in "Outlandish-Fruits: Commissioning Nature for the Museum of Man." Though the authors agree that museums act as cultural guides intended to expand our worldview, they debate as to whether seventeenth-century European collections of curiosities, or "wonder cabinets," are museum prototypes which fill the same niche, or, because of their lack of explanations, are intended only to baffle audiences. In some aspects, the essays discuss whether strange collections are organized to be understood, or if pure astonishment is their primary objective.

Through authors' scholarly discussion, we can explore the possibility that the Isabella Stewart Gardner collection fulfills a purpose beyond order vs. disorder or speculation vs. understanding. Through deliberate planning, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum brings a sense of the uncanny to our own culture and encourages us to see previously understood concepts with fresh eyes. It serves not only to clarify new ideas with which we may be unfamiliar but also to make seemingly established concepts less certain. By juxtaposing the well known and the mysterious, the Isabella Stewart Gardner brings a sense of astonishment to both. In this way, it exemplifies the qualities of both wonder cabinets and museums. Mullaney and Boesky's insights on both institutions therefore shed light on our desire to learn and be amazed.

Although Mullaney's primary goal is to examine the methods of Shakespearian performance techniques in Elizabethan England, he opens his work with several examples of that culture's fascination with unknowns. Mullaney uses the phenomenon of wonder cabinets to demonstrate that audiences of the time wanted to be dazzled and mystified by collections rather than to be educated and demystify them. He considers the wonder cabinet to be a disorderly collection of "things on holiday, randomly juxtaposed and displaced from any proper context," where items from various cultures are made stranger still by their proximity to other foreign objects (42). He considers then that the modern museum was not able to arrive until the ideas behind wonder cabinets were destroyed and replaced with a desire for cataloging and providing explanations for the unknown.

Boesky's work draws different conclusions than this part of Mullaney's essay. Her text focuses primarily on museums as a cultural institution in history, whereas Mullaney only uses wonder cabinets as an example of Elizabethan era audiences' desire to be astonished by unfamiliar concepts. Unlike Mullaney, Boesky interprets wonder cabinets as an earlier form of the modern museum and states that both institutions ultimately educate by revealing previously unseen patterns within collections. Although modern museums have a more obvious structure for classification, Boesky argues, wonder cabinets still hold a certain type of order in disorder. Boesky sees wonder cabinets as a reflection on what holds society's interest, which thus becomes an education unto itself. Boesky discredits Mullaney's argument that they represent randomness and chaos,

and posits that all collections are "allegories of classification" and inherently have some form of organization and significance (309). To Boesky, an object without explanation is not only itself. It takes its symbolic meaning from the way we perceive it; it is defined by our understanding. New connections are automatically created between objects when we put them together because this changes how we understand them in context. Mullaney does not take this idea into account in his essay and assumes we are unable to understand, only to marvel, without a given explanation.

However, Mullaney and Boesky seem to agree that a museum's goal is to add to a population's knowledge and give new perspective to ideas through the arrangement and display of physical objects. Whether wonder cabinets fit into this definition is undetermined. Even if wonder cabinets lacked any formal explanations, they pulled objects out of their natural habitats to be mentally poked and prodded. In modern-day museums, audiences question the world through more methodical means. Is disorder versus organization the only thing that separates the two? Or do they have completely different intentions, with one to inspire fantasy and one to dissolve illusions?

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum seems to provide support for both sides of this conversation. On one hand, Gardner's creation was made with a deliberate order, and therefore presumably a deliberate message. On the other hand, that message was never expressly stated, and instead leaves visitors of the museum to personally interpret the mood each room creates. Like a wonder cabinet, items from clashing cultures and time periods are thrown together. But in contrast, those items do not imply chaos and instead suggest a highly sophisticated method of stylistic organization. Does this mean the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum supports Boesky's view on ordered chaos as a cultural commentary or Mullaney's ideas about "things on holiday" that exist without need for explanation? I argue it is both and neither. In Gardner's museum, the wonder cabinet phenomenon is not entirely dead. The organized collection intends to inform us about far-off cultures while it simultaneously distances us from Western World concepts that audiences from Gardner's time would have understood well. It delivers no single message but invites us to develop a unique and personal viewpoint from the eclectic mix of items on careful display.

When placed in another context, objects from our culture can appear in a different light, almost as if they belong somewhere else. The Blue Room at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum makes an everyday living space feel mysterious and unearthly. The objects there would not be remarkable in a customary Victorian bedroom, although the artworks are skillfully made examples of classic and neoclassic styles. The paintings are mostly realistically detailed portraits or landscapes, common subjects and styles for the Victorian period. However, the traditional art strikes viewers as peculiar because of the way it is arranged. On every inch of vertical space hangs a painting, which creates an unending wall of imagery that dwarfs the tiny chairs and bookshelves that sit close to the floor. The room is illuminated by nothing but a small amount of natural light, so every painting dribbles the same dusky shade of blue onto its neighboring objects. The soft blue fog swallows everything, including visitors. The resulting feeling is both tranquil and eerie, as if the room itself might be asleep, or dying, or fading into ether. This is no longer a customary Victorian era living room; it is an alternate reality. In this room, the way objects are arranged strongly affects our perspective.

In Mullaney's wonder cabinets, recognizable objects become strangers as well. When "kings mingle with clowns," the hierarchy of culture is upended and we view society in a different way, similar to how Gardner's museum alters our associations with traditional Victorian paintings (42). It is then that the objects and ideas of our own time become "known but in a certain sense unaccountable, alien yet recognized as such" (Mullaney 67). We understand our surroundings in the sense that we have previous experience with them, but we are bewildered by our new contextual perspective. Things common in our culture can also take on new meaning through the eyes of others, such as the way observers of the Elizabethan wonder cabinet perceived fireflies. In Mullaney's essay, they are described as orbs that "glow at night instead of lights, since there is often no day there for over a month" (40). This must have seemed astounding to visitors of the cabinet's time, but to me the description seems laughable. I was unaware that my home state followed a different solar cycle and that people of the past were forced to rely on bugs in order to see. But despite the description's inaccuracies, it does make me reflect on the beauty of a thousand glittering lights on summer nights in the woods. The insects do possess an almost magical

air about them, like there is something unattainable hidden in each flickering pattern. Through Mullaney's second- or third-hand description, I realize that my daily surroundings can be seen through fresh eyes.

However, the opposite idea may also be applicable. Taking objects from our own cultures and placing them with things of other periods can emphasize their similar characteristics, thereby helping us to better understand them all. An example can be found in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's cool, cavernous Tapestry Room. High ceilings, delicate furniture, and finely detailed wall hangings and manuscripts emit a sense of refinement and power. At first glance, the room seems identical to halls of castles or monasteries in Renaissance Europe, filled with traditionally ornate portrayals of Christianity. However, upon closer inspection, I found that these religious works cover a span of more than 300 years (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum). More surprising still, the room contains Egyptian scrolls from the fourteenth century and earlier that seem right at home with Renaissance and Victorian interpretations of Christianity. It appears that the portrayal of religion in Gardner's time fits seamlessly together with religious motifs of the 15th and 16th centuries, and even goes along with artwork from Egyptian cultural traditions. These pieces are separated by a vast expanse of time and space, but in the Tapestry Room they sit harmoniously together. This would suggest to people of Gardner's time that religious artwork, and perhaps religions themselves, are universally familiar and knowable entities. History and geography are not barriers to our understanding, but the majesty found in the formal Tapestry Room still holds visitors in awe. This demonstrates how wonder and explanation can exist simultaneously in museums like the Isabella Stewart Gardner. When they coexist, the alien and the everyday can challenge our usual perspectives on culture and context. A visit to a local museum can then feel like a trip to a foreign land, and the most exotic country can feel as recognizable as home.

Perhaps this leads us to further questions: What is the goal of drawing connections between the familiar and unfamiliar? How would we change if our identities were shaped not by ourselves, but by outsiders who perceived us? When we as a society or as individuals bring together a collection, especially an extensive one like Gardner's, are we trying to make

an unknown culture more similar to our own, or are we trying to make our known world strange to us through new perspectives?

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KATIE GRISWOLD is studying environmental science with a minor in marine science in the College of Arts and Sciences class of 2016. She hails from the Washington DC metropolitan area, where museums are free and plentiful. The essay is dedicated to her mother and father, for showing her the Smithsonian collections and raising her with an appreciation for art. Katie also thanks Dr. Daniel Hutchins for introducing her to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Phoebe Horgan for lending inspiration and a pencil.

From the Writer

"The Epiphany as the Evanescent Moment: Flashes of Unintellectual Light in James Joyce's *Dubliners*" was my final project for my WR 100 class, a writing seminar that focused on the concept of the avant-garde. Towards the end of the semester, my professor presented the class with a rather open-ended assignment. Our task was to select any piece of work that either we or other historians would consider as falling under the umbrella of the "avant-garde" and construct our own argument from the essay based on what we noticed about the work.

I was frightful of this assignment. I was not used to choosing what I would be writing about, let alone coming up with my very own claim based on no class discussions about the work itself. I decided that the best place to start would be where my interests lie, and that is with books. In my previous essays, I had focused on avant-garde musicians, including John Cage and Yoko Ono. In this upcoming essay, I wanted to focus on a writer. After a quick search on the Internet, I was fortunate enough to discover that one of my favorite writers, James Joyce, occupied the avant-garde era. I have not read much of his work, but grew fascinated with *Dubliners* when I was in high school. After I found something exciting to write about, I was all the more eager to begin my essay.

Nonetheless, the task proved more work than I thought it would be. Devising a claim occupied most of my time. I have gleaned from classes and scholarly essays that *Dubliners* is a piece of work that highlights the notion of epiphanies, the idea that each character arrives at some sort of life-changing revelation at the end of each short story. I have always disagreed with this assertion. Every time I read a story in *Dubliners*, I find that characters never do arrive at a conclusion; they are always at a loss. My claim was still a little loose at this point, but nevertheless, it was a start.

My finished paper was accomplished through many rereads by classmates, writing tutors, and of course, my professor. Though I meant for this essay to be avant-garde in the experimental sense, I am pleased that I have learned more from the experience than I thought I would. My epiphanies are as follows: incorporating sources strengthens claims, circular reasoning is better left neglected, and write where your interests lie . . . always.

— Navraj Narula

Navraj Narula

The Epiphany as the Evanescent Moment: Flashes of Unintellectual Light in James Joyce's *Dubliners*

James Joyce's *Dubliners*, a collection of 15 short stories, defies literary norms by breaking the original storyline format of Freytag's pyramid, which suggests that a clear beginning consisting of a proper introduction of the setting and the characters, a middle discussing the conflict that would lead to a climax, and an end that ties the story together with a denouement are indispensable to any written work of fiction ("Analyzing a Story's Plot: Freytag's Pyramid"). James Joyce challenges these conventions by abruptly positioning the conflict at the start of his stories and refusing to include a resolution at the end of each one, inviting his readers to consider the cliffhanger at the end of each story in *Dubliners* rather than offering them a realization or, as most critics would say, an epiphany. In fact, as relayed by Zach Bowen, the founding editor of both the James Joyce Literary Supplement and the Florida James Joyce Series, a large number of Joyce's critics "have had something to say about [Joyce's] epiphanies and their use" in *Dubliners* (103). However, these noted critics—such as Henry Levin, Thomas Connolly, and William York Tindall—only acknowledge the everyday, hackneyed definition of epiphany, that of a "revelation" or a "realization." These critics, who solely relate the word epiphany to enlightenment, claim that the characters in *Dubliners* do indeed arrive at a realization at the end of each story. Upon inspecting *Dubliners* and its unconventional endings though, I have come to the conclusion that the figures in Joyce's stories arrive at no revelation at all. Published in 1914, a time when Irish nationalism instilled in people a desire to discover their identities, *Dubliners* offers its characters no sort of realization of their life's purposes. Instead most find themselves lost, accepting failure or unable to

proceed. Through a close reading of "Araby," "The Boarding House," and "Eveline," I will, by recovering the Joycean definition of "epiphany," demonstrate that an epiphany does not always necessarily adhere to the critical definition (or even worldly meaning) of the word as a "revelation" or a "realization." In congruency with the Joycean definition of an epiphany as a departure from the critical definition of an epiphany, the Joycean definition does not go so far as to take action in reaching a point of realization; instead, it merely showcases the experiences of the characters in *Dubliners*, not drawing the reader's attention to any sort of profound revelation.

While many critics claim that what Joyce meant by an epiphany is a realization, I will argue that what Joyce meant by an epiphany is simply an unrevealing experience. In *Stephen Hero*, Joyce's posthumously published autobiographical novel, he relates that an epiphany is a "sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (*Stephen Hero* 211), believing that these epiphanies must be recorded "with extreme care, seeing that they [epiphanies] themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (211). Florence L. Walzi, an English professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee who is an expert on the early works of Joyce, examines the etymology of the word "epiphany," indicating that the basic meaning of epiphany in Greek is an "appearance" or "manifestation" related to a verb meaning "to display or show forth" (436). Then, Walzi goes even further to say that this basic meaning of an epiphany "reflects the later sense of the word as a revelation," deeming it "a flash of intellectual light" (436). While Walzi, like most critics, extends the definition of "epiphany" beyond its basic meaning, I am hesitant to leap from "appearance" or "manifestation" all the way to "revelation." Joyce explicitly defines an epiphany as a "manifestation," suggesting that an epiphany has the tendency to make a person *aware* of something, but not actually *realize* the significance of it, not struck by any "flash of intellectual light." Joyce also asserts that an epiphany is defined by "moments." In doing so, Joyce suggests that an epiphany could simply be an experience, or an occurrence in a particular moment of time that holds importance but not necessarily a revelation. The Joycean definition of an epiphany differs from the critical definition of an epiphany in that Joyce's epiphany is more than what Joyce himself presents it to be: a simple manifestation, an evanescent moment, a significant experience. The

characters in "Araby," "The Boarding House," and "Eveline" are aware of the action in their setting but never fully realize the implications of it; they are standing examples of Joycean characters who never reach the critical definition of an epiphany.

While I concur with Tindall's statement that each of the stories in *Dubliners* "may be thought of as a great epiphany…an epiphany of epiphanies" (qtd. in Scholes 65), I refute his critical definition of the word "epiphany" as meaning a realization rather than an experience. For instance, the young boy in the story of "Araby" is left unsatisfied, hallowed, and questioning his movements because no light bulb of realization has popped up beside his head (*Dubliners* 29). He had promised a girl he fancied that he would go to Araby, a night market, and bring her back a souvenir (32). Arriving at the bazaar near closing time, the young boy lingers for a while at a stall and then leaves, not buying anything (35). At the end of the story, he sees himself as a "creature driven and derided by vanity," his eyes "[burning] with anguish and anger" (35). The young boy does not come to any sort of realization; he simply goes through an experience of confusion, not knowing how to respond to his first love. Though he gains awareness of the gap between himself and his schoolboy crush, he remains in the dark about how to respond to the girl he loves. Taking no control of his situation, he angrily leaves the market—lifeless (35). He does not realize what to do next or how to go about handling the lovesickness of his situation; as a matter of fact, the reader must go about ending the story of "Araby" for this young boy since Joyce provides no resolution for him, but only delivers a taste of his "evanescent…[moment]" (*Stephen Hero* 211), rather than yielding to Tindall's definition of an epiphany, which would imply that the young boy arrived at a concrete turning point rather than simply a halfway point.

In agreement with Scholes' view, the role of the epiphany is to "function dramatically in an artistic context, revealing character, attitude, and emotion" (76). The "epiphanies" that Joyce employs at the end of each story in *Dubliners* may leave the reader blank without a resolution in mind, but the very emptiness of a proper ending also injects readers with a greater understanding of the figures in the story as well as how they respond to their own experiences. Much like the reader, Polly in "The Boarding House" is uninformed about the happenings in her life (61). She

does not realize that her mother is pushing for Mr. Doran to take her hand in marriage so as to save the family reputation Polly has stained by becoming involved with him, or that Mr. Doran is hesitant to wed Polly because he trusts that he could never truly grow to love her (66). At the end of the story, Polly does not come to any firm realization. "The Boarding House" ends with her as she is shedding tears of confusion, still wary about what the future might hold for her (69). Much like Polly, the reader is also unable to reach a conclusion. However, by vicariously living through Polly's Joycean epiphany, the reader can sympathize with her experience and better understand Polly as a character while at the same time struggling to remove the cliffhanger at the end of her story; for like many of Joyce's characters, she arrives at no revelation.

As with "Araby" and "The Boarding House," "Eveline" does not conform to the critical definition of an epiphany as a realization, but rather to the Joycean definition of an epiphany as an experience instead. Eveline needs to make a choice: to either remain subjugated at home by staying with her abusive father or to sail away to Buenos Aires with her lover to live a life of freedom (36). Unlike the young boy in "Araby" and Polly in "The Boarding House" who respond to their experiences—whether by abruptly leaving the marketplace or crying for comfort—Eveline finds herself at an impasse, literally unable to move (41). Her lover, Frank, wills her to come by calling out to her three times, but instead "she set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or of recognition" (41). Eveline encounters no sort of *aha* moment, no revelation. She is left confounded, lost without a revelation. The critical definition of an epiphany does not apply to Eveline; she simply stumbles upon a Joycean epiphany, or an experience, much like the characters in both "Araby" and "The Boarding House" that were also left in the unknown.

A close reading of the stories in *Dubliners* reveals Joyce suggesting that in any individual's life span, the chance of arriving at a realization is nil. Joyce presents the characters in his story in a pattern of age, starting from the youngest—"[The] Sisters" (9)—moving to the oldest, and ending with "The Dead" (175). Even as young children transform into adults, they have yet to find their purposes in life—unable to locate their ciphers. They only experience the Joycean epiphany, arriving at death before being

able to indulge in the critical epiphany. Kevin J.H. Dettmar, an English professor at Pomona College, states, "If we are honest, however, for many of us the story ends not in epiphany but in utter muddle" (80). Much like the readers who are left in confusion at the end of the story, the characters are more so left without answers, still questioning their identities. Joyce provides no ending for them, no resolution, and certainly no realization. As a matter of fact, the pattern of age that Joyce adopts while relating the stories of the characters in *Dubliners* points toward the notion that throughout one's life, one may never even encounter any sort of realization. As opposed to critics who assert that *Dubliners* is a collection of 15 short stories emphasizing revelations, I propose, in adopting the Joycean definition of an epiphany, that *Dubliners* is a collection of 15 short stories *lacking* in revelations. Both the characters in *Dubliners and* Joyce's readers arrive at no realizations at the end of any of the stories.

Joyce wrote *Dubliners* between 1905 and 1914: a time when Irish nationalism was at its apex (Vore 3). During this time, people were not only instilled with a desire to fight for Ireland's independence, but they were also struggling to discover their identities and their purposes in life amidst the revolution (Vore 3). The young boy of "Araby," Polly, and Eveline, posed in the backdrop of this fueling, nationalistic setting, ironically do not reach any revelations. Instead these characters are merely at a loss for their identities: the young boy unaware of how to respond to his first love, Polly not knowing if her future is with Mr. Doran or not, and Eveline having trouble letting go of her former identity as a domestic-bound woman. The experiences that these characters go through of still being left in the unknown during a time when Irish nationalism and identity-finding was at its apex mirrors the experience of the readers who are also still left in confusion with no resolution to cling on to. Critics—such as Levin, Connolly, and Tindall—assert that epiphanies are prevalent in James Joyce's *Dubliners*; however, in actuality no character transforms into a dynamic one and proceeds towards change because no character, much like the reader, has reached any sort of revelation. The young boy, Polly, and Eveline have only jumped into the pool of experience that is the Joycean epiphany, not yet having bathed in the "flash of intellectual light" (Walzi, 436), not yet having immersed themselves in realization. They are still left lost in the shallow end: the "evanescent . . . moment[s]."

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From the Instructor

You, the reader of this anthology, hopefully glance at the introductory comments that precede each work. Curious but skeptical, you may ask, can the writer justify stealing your time, bending your ear, insisting on being heard? An introductory paragraph can be difficult to compose, but an entire essay that is devoted to introducing another set of texts offers a host of particular challenges to a writer. In Rob Pressel's extraordinary essay, introducing a series of 1960s Civil Rights speeches, he confronted his own specific challenges in his final paper for our WR 100 seminar, "Oratory in America."

Rob's biggest question concerned the use of first person and the inclusion of autobiographical details. We looked at several models, and the example of Gore Vidal's insistent, swaggering first person introduction to a collection of Lincoln speeches forced the class to ask if we, as collegiate, academic writers, could take such risks?

Rob initially hesitated to include any personal details in his introduction. However, he recognized that his motivation for writing about sacrifice during the Civil Rights Movement arose due to the 1964 murder of his great uncle Michael Schwerner. Rob came to see that readers might well find this personal and real-life tragedy as something more than simply a compelling detail. Writers must always make difficult choices, and the decision to include sensitive personal details needs to be carefully considered. In this case, Rob came to believe that writing about his uncle's sacrifice had the potential—if presented in a non-exploitative manner—to help readers understand the real-life relevance of writing and speaking about the profound sacrifices that marked the Civil Rights Movement.

Rob was much more confident about including the anecdote relating his meeting with Civil Rights leader, John Lewis. This incident linked the 1960s to the present in a way that helped drive home the relevance of Rob's essay. The rest of the essay is free of personal details; however, by bookending the introductory essay with events that personally touched him, Rob shows his readers how historical personages and events can touch us and teach us.

— David Shawn

WR 100: Oratory in America

From the Writer

Even half a century after the fact, the ideas of the Civil Rights Movement still resonate throughout the American consciousness. Race is in some ways still a dominant part of American political discourse, and the goals of the time are still being debated, in Congress and in the courts. Much of the rhetoric of the time has been co-opted by other movements in our own era, primarily supporters of marriage equality.

However, in the past, supporters of civil rights for African Americans often suffered psychological and physical harm, and even death, to a vastly greater extent than today. These constant threats left an indelible mark on the oratory of the time, and particularly in famous speeches we have heard our whole lives. In this paper, I analyze how this idea of sacrifice influenced and weighed on these speakers, from those directly affected, such as the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., to those looking on, such as President Lyndon Johnson.

For this essay, I struggled to find a way to focus on a multitude of speeches, from a variety of speakers, and to emphasize the unique perspective and ideas underpinning each one, while still addressing the main theme. Additionally, I found it difficult to incorporate my personal connection and interest in the topic. In the end though, I of course let the decades old words speak for themselves. The ideas they convey, and the people who spoke them, still can, and should, be meaningful to this day.

— Robert Pressel

Robert Pressel

The Costs of Justice: An Introduction to a Collection of Speeches from the Civil Rights Movement

On June 21, 1964, my great uncle, Michael Schwerner, along with two other men, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman, traveled to Philadelphia, Mississippi to register disenfranchised African Americans to vote. There, they were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan, paying the ultimate price for their ideals. However, they were not the only ones. In the decades-long struggle for equality and justice, hundreds more were arrested, beaten, and killed. At Birmingham and Selma, marchers were beaten by police, gassed, and attacked with firehouses and dogs. Well-known figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Medgar Evers were assassinated for their actions. How could the leaders at the time, including those within the movement, such as Dr. King, as well as political leaders, such as President Lyndon Johnson and Senator Robert Kennedy, address these costs when speaking in support of justice? How did their portrayals of these costs differ from each other, and how did differing perspectives affect their rhetoric? What did these leaders intend when discussing these personal sacrifices? Gradually, as the movement evolved, the speakers began to address these sacrifices in a more direct way, rather than abstractly or through allusion. Additionally, those more directly involved, such as King, addressed the costs in a more personal manner than those outside, especially Johnson. These leaders sought to garner public support through addressing their own costs, and comparing those to past American sacrifices in support of the same values.

This anthology will primarily focus on the works of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lyndon Baines Johnson, and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. From Dr. King, I chose his "Address to the March on

Washington," arguably his most famous speech, especially for its well-known phrase "I have a Dream," as well as his "Speech at the Mason Temple," delivered after the Civil Rights movement had, at least for the most part, achieved its main goals and largest contributions, and delivered the day before his assassination. From President Johnson, I exclusively focus on his "Address to Congress on the Voting Rights Act," delivered, naturally, in support of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Finally, from Senator Kennedy, I examine his "Address at the University of Cape Town," delivered at the height of the Civil Rights movement, and his "Remarks on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., a highly emotional appeal after the death of Dr. King. My reasons for choosing these sources shall be elaborated on more deeply as the speeches themselves are discussed, but primarily I chose them for their differing portrayals of sacrifice, and for their characterizations of those bearing this heavy burden. Frequently throughout these addresses, the speakers allude to other, earlier speeches, especially President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address; however, I have chosen to leave this out, so that the primary focus of this anthology could be on the Civil Rights movement itself, rather than a complete history of African Americans in the United States. Rather, I see Lincoln's importance to the movement as primarily symbolic, and in the ways they adapt his rhetoric as their own.

While the main focus of this essay will be on the personal and social costs that resulted from violence and hatred, it is important to address first the political costs inherent in support for the Civil Rights movement. For this, we must focus on President Lyndon Johnson, a white Democrat from Texas, who succeeded to the Oval Office after President John Kennedy's assassination, and was subsequently re-elected the next year. Even as a white Southerner, Johnson was an ardent supporter of equal rights for blacks, as shown by his "Address on the Voting Rights Act." However, he knew that this support was not universally popular, and there could be a political backlash. Given the opposition to Civil Rights within Congress and among the public, this support could cost Johnson large amounts of political capital, possibly negating any potential future initiatives. After signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Johnson famously said, "We [Democrats] have lost the South for a generation." He knew that his support for the movement could cost Southern Democrats their elected

positions, and potentially could cost him his own presidency. However, he was willing to take these risks. Johnson knew that when he stated "And we shall overcome," in his address, he would unequivocally tie himself to the movement (265). While the potential *political* costs are not fully elaborated on by Johnson, unlike the *physical and personal* costs paid by others, they form an underlying tone throughout the whole address. In a clear reference to those who oppose this bill and his support for it, Johnson addresses "those who seek to avoid action by their National Government in their own communities" (264). He declares that "there is no constitutional issue here" nor an "issue of States or national rights." He aims to address the common refrain that support for equality was a violation of states rights (264). It is fairly clear throughout this speech that Johnson does not expect to mitigate these political costs, hence he does not fully address them. Instead, he accepts them in the name of "the struggle for human rights" (264). Rather than be the President who bows to popular Southern opinion, he wants "to be the President who helped to end hatred among his fellow men," regardless of politics (269).

During the early stages of the movement, at least as evidenced by these speeches, leaders seemed to be hesitant to cite specific examples of violence and discrimination against proponents of Civil Rights, but rather chose to rely on general descriptions of a backlash against marchers. During his "Address to the March on Washington," Dr. King frequently cites examples of discrimination, such as his reference to "Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of 'interposition' and 'nullification'" (255). However, the reader would be hard pressed to find any specific examples in the rhetoric that highlight any violent backlash against marchers. Instead, Dr. King prefers general terms to highlight the heavy toll being paid, thanking those in the audience who "have come fresh from narrow jail cells" and have "[been] battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality" (254). By the time the March on Washington took place, multiple incidents had occurred where supporters of civil rights paid the heavy price of being arrested, beaten, or even killed: for example, Bull Connor's attacks on marchers in Birmingham and the murder of Medgar Evers. Since King surely would have known of these events, their exclusion from his address must have been deliberate. According to historian David Garrow, in the

buildup to the March on Washington, "in both his public and private comments, King focused on how Birmingham had made clear the pressing need for unilateral executive action on civil rights" (267). In his book *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, Garrow discusses King and the SCLC's preparations for the March, and how they could address the President and Congress on initiating change, particularly given Robert Kennedy's "growing emotional involvement." It is somewhat surprising that King does not seem to use this direct emotional appeal on the Kennedys. Most likely, King chose to mention the common practice of arrests and beatings of supporters in order to drum up public sympathy for those affected and the movement itself. However, he chose not to focus on specific incidents, possibly either to avoid disturbing those who were directly affected, or, more likely, so as not to effectively scare away potential supporters through concrete and controversial examples of sacrifice. Additionally, according to Garrow, in the wake of Medgar Evers' assassination, King "wanted to take some action in response to [the killing]," such as "a national day of mourning and establish[ing] a memorial fund," to draw attention to the cause and drum up public support (269). Unfortunately, according to Garrow, this only had the effect of creating a schism within the movement, splitting the SCLC from the NAACP, so for future speeches, King chose to focus on these generic examples of costs paid by the movement's supporters. However, soon, King and other civil rights leaders were to realize that this tactic was not as effective as it could be, and would soon transition to a more direct approach.

As the Civil Rights movement continued, with some successes and some failures, we can see more examples of straightforward and blunt discussion of specific instances of costs paid by supporters of the movement. The primary examples, among others, which are most significant, are the marches from Selma, one of which later came to be known as "Bloody Sunday." President Johnson first refers to Bloody Sunday in his "Address on Voting Rights," calling out the city and explaining how "long-suffering men and women peacefully protested the denial of their rights as Americans. Many were brutally assaulted. One good man, a man of God, was killed" (261). He concludes that "there is no cause for pride in what has happened in Selma" (261). It is interesting to note that it was Johnson, a

white Southerner, who first discusses the tragic events at Selma, a major instance of violence perpetuated against civil rights supporters and a key turning point in public opinion. For the first time, large Northern white audiences had witnessed the sacrifices paid by these advocates, and as such, Selma became a symbol of the injustice of Jim Crow laws and the brutality of the anti-civil rights backlash. According to historian Garth Pauley, in his article on Johnson's voting rights address, the primary impetus behind the timing and rationale of Johnson's support for the Act was the violent events at Selma. Johnson needed to use a "rhetoric appeal" to the masses, because "active public support could fade quickly," after memories of violence faded. Pauley argues that the violence at Selma serves as a "pivotal term in Johnson's speech: it is the term that marks the movement from the immediate present to a more mythic time" (40). He says that Johnson used allusions to the sacrifices at Selma not only to press the public and Congress for rapid change, but in order to provide a segue to a more idealistic nation without discrimination, and without the necessity of sacrifice. In addition to Johnson, King himself shifts to this style of rhetoric in later years. For example, when referring to the events in Birmingham, Alabama during his "Speech at the Mason Temple," he tells how he and the other marchers "went on before the dogs and we would look at them, and we'd go on before the water hoses and we would look at it. And we'd just go on singing" (284). King describes how regardless of what Bull Connor and the police did, the marchers kept going, and even if they would be "thrown into paddy wagons [and] stacked in there like sardines in a can" they "would just go on in the paddy wagon singing" (284). King describes to the public how no matter what was thrown at them, supporters of the Civil Rights movement could continue their non-violent tactics, even in the face of violence.

Given the desire of the heads of the Civil Rights movement to appeal to the American public and garner sympathy for their cause, it is natural that they should compare the costs they face with those faced by past Americans who fought for freedom, justice, and equality. Once again, Johnson is the first to transition to this rhetorical tactic. He appeals to turning points in American history and the fight for freedom when he says "at times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at

Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama" (261). Johnson seeks to connect the specific events pertaining to the Civil Rights movement to specific struggles for American values in the past. He is not the only one. Robert Kennedy, when speaking to students at the University of Cape Town, called them to serve by citing the "thousands of unknown men and women in Europe [who] resisted the occupation of the Nazis and many died, but all added to the ultimate strength and freedom of their countries" (278). It is Kennedy now who not only cites examples of service and sacrifice, but also calls upon his audience directly to make those sacrifices, saying that "each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, [and] those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance" (278). While we have seen other leaders of the movement who have appealed to broad audiences and the general public, Kennedy seeks primarily to appeal to students and youth, those who are the most likely to support his cause, but least likely to act. Others may say Kennedy was, like Johnson, speaking to a much larger audience, given his stature and influence. However, given that he was speaking at a university, and that throughout his speech he constantly calls to "young people" or "students," it is likely this group that is whom he primarily spoke to. Unfortunately, the next time Kennedy was called upon to speak, on the death of Dr. King, he spoke to a much larger audience.

Inarguably the most high-profile leader of the Civil Rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April of 1968, sparking riots in the streets of American cities. How could King himself address threats to his life, and more importantly, how could others address his sacrifice after he was gone? In his "Speech at the Mason Temple," delivered in Memphis, Tennessee, the day before his death, King first begins to address some of these concerns, telling the audience of when he was stabbed by a woman in New York. He tells them that "had [he] sneezed, [he] would have died" (290). He begins to articulate how happy he was to have participated in the movement, and that his sacrifice and pain were worth the gains for his community. He repeats the phrase "if I had sneezed" (290–1) and cites different events during his history with the movement and how he would not have seen them. It is an eerie reverie of his role

within the movement, and the community. After this, however, King has a very uncanny foreshadowing of his own death. He tells the crowd, "We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't really matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. [. . .] I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. [. . .] I'm not worried about anything" (291–2). King foreshadows his own death, indicating his support for the movement may cost him his life, but that its success would be worth his sacrifice. He says that his personal, and ultimate, sacrifice will be worth the gains for his community, and that equality would eventually prevail for the nation, if not for him. King, as a minister again, makes a biblical allusion in this case, citing Moses' climb up the mountain to see Israel before his death. Though King could not know how imminent his death would be, he seeks to calm the community before it inevitably comes.

However, it ultimately falls to Kennedy to calm the nation. The day after the assassination, at a rally in Indianapolis, Kennedy announced King's death to those in his immediate audience, yet spoke to America as a whole. He calls on the nation not to "be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and a desire for revenge," but to "make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and to replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand with compassion and love" (293). Kennedy tells the nation to listen to King's message, and references his own family's sacrifice and what he endured. "I can only say that I feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed [. . .] but we have to make an effort [. . .] to go beyond these rather difficult times" (293). Kennedy reminds the audience of the assassination of his brother, President John Kennedy, to drive home the point that regardless of how awful, how violent the act or the oppressor, justice and equality can only win through "understanding and compassion" (294).

While Medgar Evers, Michael Schwerner, and Martin Luther King, Jr. may be dead, not only do their ideas live on, but so do many of the people who marched and sacrificed with them, and continue to carry on their legacy. A few years ago, I had the fortune to have an incredible

meeting with Congressman John Lewis (D-GA), a civil rights leader who spoke with Dr. King at the March on Washington, and who demonstrated with countless others in Selma on Bloody Sunday. He spoke to us of his experiences and how even if he knew what he would go through, he would have done it all over again. He told us that while full equality has not yet been reached, we, as a nation, have taken immense steps forward. He explained that had he been told as a young man that a black man would one day be President of the United States, he would have laughed, but how on the election of Barack Obama, "to the people who were beaten, put in jail, [. . .] it's amazing." Finally, he told us how on Inauguration Day 2009, he was embraced by President Obama, who told him his election was "because of you, John," and all of the other brave men and women who risked and sacrificed their lives for a greater cause (2010).

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ROBERT PRESSEL is studying political science and history with the CAS class of 2016. He comes from Philadelphia. He would like to thank Professor Shawn for his help, both with this paper, and with the class, "Oratory in America," as a whole.

From the Instructor

Ryan Chernin's thesis constitutes an original and insightful contribution to the scholarship on *The Wire*. He is, in large measure, correct in his claims that others have yet to dial into that element of this complex work that hearkens back to that earlier phase of the detective genre and his careful attention to the literary texts in the 'hardboiled' genre above and beyond their rendering in film of the post-war period proves a well-conceived and fruitful gambit. Chernin properly belongs to a second generation of scholars of *The Wire*, who, along with Bramall and Pitcher, and Thompson too, all whom he cites, demonstrate how with the passage now of a decade we are entering the period where the initial quite defamiliarizing impact of the program is giving way to increasingly successful generic analyses. While provocative and very well executed, Chernin's argument may nonetheless be open to countervailing systemic criticisms, such as has been inaugurated by Kinder, whom he also cites, that might question whether the stolid individualist figured in the hardboiled detective protagonist stands in the avatar of Jimmy McNulty quite so proudly, quite so self-reliantly, quite so self-assured, or whether the system he bucks is perhaps with the turn of the next century bucking him back in a new, ironic, and ultimately more problematic way.

— Michael Degener

WR 150: Renaissance TV: Serial Drama and the Cable Revolution

Ryan Chernin

Hardwired: HBO's *The Wire* and the Hardboiled Detective Tradition

The first season of HBO's serialized crime drama *The Wire* has been called a milestone in the evolution of television drama, and the show has been discussed in academic essays and conferences as well as in the popular media. In fact, whole books and even university courses have been devoted to the analysis of its sociological and ethnographic implications (Bramall and Pitcher 86). Critics have praised *The Wire* for seeming "to challenge a dominant regime of representations" (86)—especially in the inclusion of women, minorities and gay characters—and for making "contemporary social life more comprehensible" (88). However, these critical analyses do little to account for the popularity of the show. After all, ethnographic studies rarely command the kinds of ratings needed to sustain a television series for five seasons, so *The Wire* must indeed be something more. Moreover, more than a decade after the first season of *The Wire* premiered in 2002, it is clear that the show has not had the profound influence over the nature of popular television in America that some critics predicted. Indeed, not a single show has tried to imitate either its style or its subject matter. Why, then, does *The Wire* stand out from the mainstream, even after its own success, as if it were something new and different, and yet engage audiences so compellingly, as if it were cast in a guaranteed formula for success? *The Wire* is, in fact, cast in a tried-and-true format, and yet it is one not commonly associated with contemporary television entertainment: the form of the "hardboiled" detective novel most closely associated with the 1930s and 1940s.

Some authors have argued that *The Wire* combined a unique set of qualities that gave the show its distinctive character and that made it

a particularly popular subject for critical analysis. For example, Marsha Kinder compares *The Wire* to earlier crime dramas such as *The Naked City* and *The Godfather* and argues that, unlike these productions, *The Wire* does not concern itself primarily with a single case or a single crime family. Rather, *The Wire* "is committed to a systemic analysis of Baltimore" (50), the city in which the series takes place, and Kinder argues that *The Wire* is unique not only for this reason but because it depicts the social forces that give rise to criminal organizations. Conversely, Daniel Herbert notes that many of *The Wire's* contemporary television dramas, such as *24* and *Battlestar Galactica,* are in fact concerned with broad social issues, but he argues that these shows address these issues in the context of escapist fantasy. *Battlestar Galactica,* in particular, presents an allegory of contemporary political conflicts, whereas *The Wire* takes "an actively *anti-allegorical* stance toward the representation of social issues" (192). These authors, then, argue that *The Wire* is unique in its combination of social awareness and a realistic depiction of the social environment.

Kinder, Herbert, and other critics have failed to find a precedent or parallel for *The Wire* because they have confined their search to contemporary popular film and television drama rather than encompassing earlier forms of popular narrative. For this reason, they have failed to recognize that many of the qualities that they praise in *The Wire* are characteristic of detective fiction, particularly the so-called "hardboiled" American detective novels of the 1930s and 1940s. Kecia Driver Thompson comes closest when she analyzes *The Wire* in the context of naturalist fiction (81), but her analysis is concerned primarily with the tradition of African American fiction. Rather, I believe, *The Wire* finds its clearest parallels in the novels of writers like Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, which today's audiences probably know best from numerous film adaptations. This affinity may not be initially obvious since these films offer less detail than the books from which they were adapted, as well as because the hardboiled detective novel is mainly associated with the 1930s and 1940s, the social problems and issues of which may seem more like history than realism to today's reader or viewer. Nonetheless *The Wire* reflects the central qualities of this genre: cynical characters trying to maintain their integrity in a corrupt world. Moreover, like *The Wire,* the hardboiled detective writers were,

in their own day, celebrated (and often criticized) for their realistic depiction of the urban environment.

The most obvious parallel between *The Wire* and the hardboiled genre is in the character of the detective. While *The Wire* is an ensemble show, Detective Jimmy McNulty is arguably the protagonist of at least the first season. He appears in the first scene, before the opening credits have rolled, and he initiates the investigation that runs throughout the plot of that season. He is introduced as a jaded and sarcastic character, particularly when he chides his partner for "giving a fuck when it's not your turn to give a fuck." However, it is clear that he cares about his job: he attends a trial that was not one of his cases, and he later complains to the judge about drug dealers literally getting away with murder. When a task force is formed to make a case against the drug gang, McNulty makes it clear that he is not willing to just play the game and make a few quick arrests. He wants to do "real police work" and get a conviction against Avon Barksdale, the leader of the gang. In this respect, *The Wire* is consistent with Chandler's observation that the hardboiled story "does not believe that murder will out and justice will be done—unless some very determined individual makes it his business to see that justice is done" (II 1017).

McNulty is well educated, and he has a sense of the world beyond the demands of his job. In the first episode he makes a reference to the classic film *A Bridge Too Far* that his partner fails to recognize. However, over the course of the season, the viewers learn that he has sacrificed all that he has in order to do his job. He is, in Chandler's words, "a lonely man . . . a poor man, or he would not be a detective" (II 992). McNulty's apartment is bare, with minimal furniture and no decorations. This mirrors the description of Philip Marlowe's apartment in *The Big Sleep:* "In it was everything that was mine. . . . Not much; a few books, pictures, radio, chessmen, old letters, stuff like that. Nothing" (I 708). His marriage has ended, and his work even intrudes into the time that he spends with his children. In one episode he takes them with him to a morgue, and in another he loses them in a crowded market after teaching them to trail a suspect. To some extent, this sense of isolation and commitment is an inevitable part of any detective story since personal relationships tend to detract from the main plot; for this reason, however, it is a recognizable characteristic of the genre.

Another of the hallmarks of hardboiled detective fiction is its use of gritty language. As Walter Mosley explains, "hardboiled language . . . is elegant and concise language used to describe an ugly and possibly irredeemable world. . . . [I]t is a blunt object intent upon assault and battery" (599). The language of the hardboiled detective is the common language of the streets, but it is not plain-spoken or simple. Rather, it is full of similes and allusions meant as much to conceal as to express the speakers' meanings. This is a feature of the urban dialect spoken by many of the characters in *The Wire.* As Thompson notes, "many critics have confessed to watching Season One with the subtitles on, despite the fact that all the characters are speaking English" (87). However, the language spoken by the detectives can be equally cryptic. For example, in a five-minute scene from episode four McNulty and his partner have no other dialogue than a constant repetition of the word "fuck." According to David Simon, one of the series' creators, this dialogue is taken from a comment made by veteran detective Terry McLarney on the use of profanity among the Baltimore police (20). Despite the real-life source, however, the device goes back to the approach of Chandler and his contemporaries. As Chandler puts it, "All language begins with speech, and the speech of the common man at that" (II 989); common speech, in the hardboiled detective story, is used to create a world that is both recognizable and alien, coded so as to be accessible only to those already on the inside.

While the use of rugged character types and gritty language gives the hardboiled detective story its style, the substance of the genre is found in the world that the writers create. As Simon explains, *The Wire* "was not about crime. Or punishment. Or the drug war. Or politics. Or race. Or education, labor relations or journalism. It was about The City" (3). It is in this respect, in fact, that *The Wire* comes closest to the world of the hardboiled detective:

> [A] world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities . . . where the mayor of your town may have condoned murder as an instrument of money-making, where no man can walk down a dark street in safety because law and order are things we talk about but refrain from practicing; a world where you may witness a holdup in broad daylight and see who did it, but you will fade quickly back

> into the crowd rather than tell anyone, because the holdup men may have friends with long guns. (Chandler II 991)

This idea of honest characters caught up in a corrupt world best defines the hardboiled detective story, and this theme is reflected in *The Wire* and in the narrative arc of Season One. In the course of that season, the task force uncovers a world in which following the money from drug deals can lead to real estate schemes and campaign contributions. In this world the detectives are forced to make compromises in order to maintain their integrity. At one point McNulty covers up the murder of a gang member because the murderer, Omar Little, is a witness to the murder of an innocent civilian. At another time McNulty prevents FBI agents, who want to make a case against certain corrupt politicians, from offering a deal to Barksdale. Of course, by doing so McNulty is letting the politicians off the hook in order to make his own case against Barksdale. Thus, priorities are always at least potentially in conflict, and right and wrong are never unambiguous terms.

This bleak and compromised view of society is new to commercial television. When Simon was writing *Homicide: Life on the Streets* for NBC, he was frequently asked, "Where are the victories?" and "Where are the life-affirming moments?" (12–13). There are relatively few victories in *The Wire,* and the life-affirming moments are carefully disguised. In fact, it often seems as if the characters' efforts to achieve better lives only lead to worse defeats. In one plot strand or narrative arc, Wallace, a young gang member, becomes traumatized over his role in a brutal murder, and he decides to leave the gang. In a rare act of insubordination, Barksdale's nephew, D'Angelo, tries to protect the boy and refuses to tell his uncle where Wallace has gone. However, Wallace eventually returns to the only life he knows, and he is killed because the gang no longer trusts him. This leads D'Angelo to question his loyalties and to make a deal with the police—until his mother forces him to choose between protecting his family and doing what is right. In the final episode, D'Angelo chooses his family and ends up facing twenty years in prison.

There are no victories in this story, but that does not mean that it is without hope. Indeed, the life-affirming moments in *The Wire* do not come from the victories. Rather, they come from the struggles. They can be seen in D'Angelo's willingness to protect someone like Wallace even at the risk

of his own safety. Similarly, in episode ten, Detective Greggs agrees to help her confidential informant, Bubbles, kick his addiction to drugs. Unfortunately, before she can fulfill her promise, Greggs is shot in an undercover operation, and by the time anyone else can reach out a hand to Bubbles, he is "using" again. However, a "life-affirming moment" can still be found in Bubbles' desire to "get clean" and in Greggs' willingness to help him to do so. In other words, despite the odds stacked against them, and despite their frequent defeats, the characters in *The Wire* continue to struggle, and they continue to reach out to one another. Without this struggle there would be no victories—and, one can argue, without this struggle the show would not be worth watching.

The similarities between *The Wire* and the hardboiled detective novels of the 1930s and 1940s no doubt arise to some extent from the effort of the writers, in both cases, to depict the criminal world as accurately as possible. Indeed, Dashiell Hammett was a detective before he became a writer, and the two creators of *The Wire* were a former police officer and a former newspaper reporter. Thus, one might say that others have failed to imitate the successful model of *The Wire* either because they failed to recognize this model or because their creators stood at too great a remove from urban reality. This view, however, understates the role of creativity—of fiction—in realistic drama. As Chandler pointed out, "You must remember that Marlowe is not a real person. He is a creature of fantasy. He is in a false position because I put him there" (quoted in Speir 106). Herbert, in an interesting contrast to this reminder of the *created* character of fiction, argues that *The Wire* does *not* represent fiction's most artificial extreme: a work of allegory. This seemingly obvious conclusion regarding a realistic drama, however, may miss an important insight. Bramall and Pitcher, in fact, counter Herbert's argument by comparing the narrative arc of *The Wire* to the complicated internal politics of their own area of experience: the field of academic cultural studies at British universities. Following their argument, *The Wire's* popularity derives *precisely* from its function as allegory. After all, anyone who has dealt with bureaucracy and with the frustration that red tape and petty squabbling can cause *in any sphere or profession* can relate to the struggles of the police task force that form the basis of the plot of *The Wire*, and anyone who has been caught up by forces beyond his or her control can empathize

with D'Angelo or Wallace. In their efforts to do right in a world that is inherently corrupt, these characters simply play out the petty struggles of modern life—though on a grander, more dangerous scale and with higher stakes than most of us typically experience. Despite the odds and despite the risks, they weigh their priorities and maintain their integrity—and, when they can, they reach out a hand to help those around them. This is the core of the narrative arc and the basis of the appeal of *The Wire*: who, after all, could fail to relate to that?

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From the Instructor

I designed WR 150: 1968/2011 to teach research skills in the first half of the course and then allow students to use those skills to learn more about a topic of their choice in the second half. Earlier in the semester we had examined a number of academic essays and found most to be written in a three-part structure: first, authors discuss what has already been written about a given topic; they follow this up with a problem or question that hasn't been addressed in that body of discourse; and finally, authors pose a solution to that problem by introducing their take or position. Paper 3 had to be structured in this way.

Lisa Lau knew early on that she wanted to examine the role of history during the Arab Spring in Egypt in 2011. She had done research on how state museums in various countries shape the national historical narrative and she wanted to examine how the burning down and total loss of the Institute d'Egypte museum of ancient Egyptian history during the Arab Spring might affect the historical narrative of the Egyptians. What she found fascinating was that at the moment of this tremendous loss, most Egyptians had never set foot inside the museum and knew practically nothing about the history it told. How much was Egyptian historical consciousness actually affected then?

The murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street near Tahrir Square, in contrast, offer a narrative of history that is constantly being "written," edited, erased, and "rewritten," presenting a visual narrative of events that is accessible to all Egyptians. Thus "The Murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street: Reclaiming Narratives of Living History for the Egyptian People" was born. Lisa's first draft was exhaustive in its research, however it took on too many topics. I made some suggestions on theoretical background sources on history, nation, narrative, and the museum and provided some guidelines for cutting and focusing. I hope Lisa will continue to work on this project and eventually publish it as a scholarly monograph.

— Jura Avizienis

WR 150: 1968/2011

From the Writer

This capstone paper for Jura Avizienis's WR 150 course "1968/2011" gave me the opportunity to examine two smaller-scale events within the Egyptian Revolution, with the result that I came to see the Revolution itself entirely differently.

Having examined the Egyptian Revolution in class from different angles, I decided to take a different route: street art. I chose the murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street because I felt that their messages needed to be heard but had not been in the West, and I began to see this neglect as part of a systemic issue in Western thinking about Egypt. The murals are the expression of an Egypt that perhaps for too long has been waiting to assert itself to the world. From this paper I hope that people can gain a better understanding and appreciation of these ongoing protests and the spirit that continues to drive them.

I have to thank Professor Avizienis for all her help, advice, and encouragement both on this paper and throughout last semester. I also have to thank the Egyptian people, who have revolutionized my life and captivated my heart since 2011. Without their inspiration I never would have written this paper.

— Lisa Lau

Lisa Lau

The Murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street: Reclaiming Narratives of Living History for the Egyptian People

Many of the murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street near Tahrir Square, created to commemorate the martyrs of the 2011 Revolution, can be observed to make remarkable use of symbols and motifs of ancient Egyptian art. At the same time, the continuing protests in Egypt have largely been divorced in Western academic discourse from any discussion of ancient Egyptian history. This pattern of disassociating modern Egypt from its ancient past has been prominent in Western thinking ever since colonizers first began to collect ancient Egyptian artifacts and documents in their own private institutions. When one of these institutions, the Institute d'Egypte, burned down in December 2011 together with many of its important historical documents, some in the West began asking questions about the Egyptians' irreverence toward their own history. In fact, however, history as cultural and social memory could not be more alive in the Egyptian Revolution and its aftermath. The Revolution has reinvigorated history on the street in a way that has the capacity to produce change in society. The most tangible evidence of this is in the street murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street, which incorporate Egyptian art in a way that endows both ancient and modern history with new meanings and that invites participation from the street, empowering Egyptians on both the individual and societal level, and legitimizing the presence of the people at a time when the state has oppressed their very existence.

Egyptian artists began painting the murals of Mohammad Mahmoud Street in the latter part of 2011 and into 2012, a time of intense fighting between protestors and the military in Mohammad Mahmoud Street and the surrounding area (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial Space";

"Walls" 129). The murals depicted the martyrs and the wounded, employing powerful elements of ancient Egyptian art (Abaza, "Walls" 130–31; Durham, "Tomb of Tahrir"). The very act of painting was a political act, part of the very same struggle against the army that it was depicting (Hussain; Mousa). As this project was ongoing, the Institute d'Egypte burned down during clashes between the army and protestors in December 2011 ("Cairo Institute"). Neither event was associated with the other. Juxtaposing these two events, however, their effects and the reactions they evoke, reveals that the murals constitute a narrative of living history directly challenging the notion that modern-day Egypt and the Revolution are disconnected from, or even detrimental to, their own history. This essay will first seek to examine and refute conventional Western thinking about modern Egypt, as evident in recent media and popular discourse, and then move on to understand the significance of the historically aware messages produced in the murals.

A mural mourning the deaths of over 70 people during a riot at a soccer match, February 2012. Artist—Alaa Awad/Photographer—Ali Khaled

The Institute d'Egypte was historically part of the French mission to dominate Egypt through gaining a monopoly over its wealth of cultural artifacts and ancient history. The Institute d'Egypte was built during Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and housed several documents

carefully recording Egypt's ancient history ("Cairo Institute"). Among these documents was the *Description d'Egypte*, a renowned twenty-four volume compilation of Egyptian history that is the basis for much of current knowledge of ancient Egypt ("Cairo Institute"). In "The Agency of Art and the Study of Modern Arab Identity," Kirsten Scheid, assistant professor of anthropology at the American University of Beirut, situates the *Description d'Egypte* as an "analogue," or a similar representation in another medium, of the nineteenth-century French paintings of Napoleon's invasion (Scheid n.p.). These paintings not only distorted historical events in favor of the French but also were agents of inscribing "cultural boundaries" between France and Egypt and establishing racial hierarchies that served as "proof of the wisdom and justice" of French colonization and exploitation of other countries (Scheid n.p.).

The scientific-colonialist endeavors of archaeology and Egyptology (which Scheid describes as a "public symbol of French national genius") allowed Western countries to lay claim to Egyptian heritage as part of their own history by virtue of their supposed superior knowledge of it, far excelling that of the Egyptians themselves (Meskell 150; Scheid n.p.).[1] Meskell, professor of anthropology at Columbia University, cites Dirks as she discusses how science aided imperialist countries in conquering new territories (149). The subjugation of natural resources to scientific disciplines allowed imperialist countries to control these resources and use them to better suit their own ends (Meskell 149–150). Just as colonialism aimed to take over the "raw materials and resources" of its conquered territories, it likewise aimed to lay claim to heritage through a process that Meskell calls "intellectual colonialism" (Meskell 150). The *Description d'Egypte,* which was a monumental achievement of these disciplines, can be seen as a victory for the West in staking their claim to the Egyptian past.

Although the *Description d'Egypte* was mourned at the time of its burning by both Egyptians and people around the world, as a loss in some sense of the greatness of Egypt's history and of the record of its monumental achievements, the origins of this document must lead us to question what choices might have been made as it was being recorded. Although I do not have the space or the resources to question the *Description d'Egypte*'s contents, which by all accounts were meticulously recorded,

scholars such as Scheid, who situate it amongst the nineteenth-century French paintings that made the viewer see a "developing" "French identity" in depictions of colonized landscapes and that thrusted France into its "political destiny" to pursue imperialism, seem to question whether the *Description d'Egypte* reflected a French cultural vision for their new empire more than it did ancient Egypt itself. (Scheid n.p.). One of course must be open to the fact that, as Jacobs (cited in Meskell 155) suggests, history as a discourse is inherently political, and the historical narrative that survived may have at the expense of other narratives which were discarded as they were deemed undesirable (in this case, to the empire appropriating the history of its subjects as its own history).

Even assuming that the *Description d'Egypte*'s contents were meticulously recorded and faithful to unbiased methodology, the real question is to what purpose these facts were intended to be so meticulously recorded and compiled into a twenty-four volume set, that is, to what purpose this historical knowledge was being put. Installed in a beautiful institute near Tahrir Square, a space enclosed and sheltered from the public, this airtight gem has not only been isolated from the people who were exploited as this history was being recorded but also has been kept away from them (Meskell 148–49, 151–59). Meskell argues that archaeologists have "excuse[d]" themselves from sharing their findings with local people and getting them involved in their work by claiming that present-day Egyptians, as Muslims, have no interest in Pharaonic history" (149, 151). Here the phenomena that results from their exclusion, namely that Egyptian people are viewed as estranged from their history, is used as justification for it. Rather, the fields of archaeology and Egyptology as they are carried out in practice have systematically excluded Egyptian people from having access to knowledge of their own history and have likewise excluded the possibility that the Egyptian people themselves retain any knowledge or cultural remnants of their past societies that may be useful in archaeologists' research, or as Meskell puts it, that archaeologists could not only teach but learn from the Egyptian people (162).

The burning of the Institute d'Egypte in Cairo near Tahrir Square in December 2011 reinvigorated debates about the need to protect Egyptian heritage from its own people, reviving colonialist discourses on Egypt's cultural patrimony. The attitudes of archaeologists in Egypt

towards Egyptian people that Meskell discusses are also evident in the responses of some non-Egyptian commentators on the burning of the Institute d'Egypt concerning Egypt's ability to manage and understand the significance of their own historical artifacts and records as cultural assets. In "The Islamists' Fires: When Will the West Wake Up?" journalist Michael Walsh describes in a primordial, barbaric way the "horde of Muslim rioters" who "annihilated a piece of history," committing "cultural jihad *against the West*" [my emphasis]. Harnessing the argument that "the planet's cultural patrimony belongs to everyone," Walsh claims that the burning of the Institute d'Egypt shows that "European cultural institutions" are threatened. The melding of this document of Egyptian history, albeit French-created, with Western history, is evidence of continued colonialist thinking that appropriates the ancient Egyptian heritage as precisely Western heritage under the guise of a concern for "global" heritage sites (Meskell 150).[2] Again his main concern is with the death of this "piece of history" (Walsh), which suddenly spurs his reaction following several months of violence that have killed and injured many Egyptians themselves. This is reminiscent of Meskell's observation that archaeologists generally treat Egyptian people as secondary to the cultural preservation of their history (147). Although Walsh states that "not all of the Islamic world is antithetical to civilization" (and here he equates civilization with Western institutions), his description of the protestors as a "horde of Muslim rioters" (Walsh) uses historically potent imagery of backwardness to inscribe the dichotomy between these people, barbaric religious fanatics, and their nobler, more enlightened ancestors. Interestingly, he calls for the UN to use force to protect heritage sites, citing this event as proof that clearly Egyptians need more heavy-handed guidance in the management of their cultural resources (Walsh).

The burning of the Institute d'Egypt clearly evoked still-extant colonialist thinking on how "global" cultural heritage should be controlled (Meskell 150). In an interesting online blog conversation, even among commenters who did not prescribe the use of force and acknowledged that Egypt must manage their own affairs, colonialism and colonialist thinking were still buttressed and even justified (Auster).[3] Thus not only is the Institute d'Egypte, and the *Description d'Egypte* which it housed, connected to the colonialist development of scientific disciplines that continue

to subjugate cultural knowledge to imperialist control, but the attitudes surrounding the burning of the Institute d'Egypte and the loss of one of the original copies of the *Description d'Egypte* shows that colonialist thinking still informs the Western public sphere (as opposed to certain specialized groups) as they make sense of Egypt's present day people and their relationship to their ancient heritage.

This is not to say that Egyptians do not value the history that was housed in the Institute d'Egypte; in fact, that is what I am arguing against. I am arguing precisely that Egyptian people in the present day actively engage with their history in their daily lives and communities, and that the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 was not violent chaos carried out by a "horde of Muslim[s]" but rather a moment when floodgates of creativity were opened and ancient Egyptian history was revived on Cairo's streets as a source of strength and national renewal (Walsh).[4] In fact, many Egyptians tried to save the historical papers housed in the Institute ("Cairo Institute"). What is really tragic about this event is not so much the valuable documents that were lost, but rather that these documents never reached the wider public. That is, the people who arguably had the right to claim and to be empowered by this rich recording of their own history, society, and culture, were ironically and tragically the one people who never had the chance to discover it, explore it, and use it for their own benefit. Although the cause of the fire was not necessarily intentional, nor explicitly anti-French or anti-Western, though it might have been, what this event does show is that historical heritage as colonialist institutions have rendered it, as artifacts and records in airtight preservation, controlled and subjugated, a form of history that in its scientific and colonial entrapments has been strangled from the living society, is not durable. Neither this history nor the institutions that house it can survive in their physical presence. Living history, in this case the people who are carrying out their revolution in this moment of time, naturally overtakes and reclaims the spaces that the ancient Egyptians once lived in themselves. The continually evolving nature of living history defies every act of preservation on the part of any scientific enterprise. Colonial empires in the past and the institutions which continue their practices in the present have been obsessed with recording history in order to materialize its existence and control it, and likewise with creating elaborate museums around it in order to impose a

physical claim on its territory. However, living history overtakes that which was physically present before, and history endures most strongly not necessarily in artifacts and records but rather in social and cultural memory that is both retained and remolded with each generation.

Releasing history from the determinism of a dominant narrative pretending to be the only one and returning it to living society, to the imagination that reinterprets and re-enfolds history into daily life and the community, can lead to empowerment. When asking the questions, "What is history?" "Where does it come from?" and "Why is it history?," we have already established above that history as a discourse is political and subject to existing power relations, and that as a preserved object history is not durable. I would argue that history, as a tool that shapes and informs society, resides most powerfully in the imagination. What is history, anyway, except an imagined national narrative? Rappaport, professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, discusses a "community narrative" (as opposed to an individual story) as a "story that is common among a group of people…A group of people with a shared narrative may constitute a community" (803).[5] Benedict Anderson expresses his idea of communities in a related but different manner in his discussion of the political community of the nation, which he describes as an "imagined community" (6). This imagined nation is based on nationalism, a "cultural artifact" whose "meanings have changed over time," an evolving narrative of national identity that evokes at times extreme emotions (Anderson 4, 6, 141). Jacobs (cited in Meskell 158) interestingly links "national imaginings" to "sanctioned heritage," suggesting that a common historical narrative at the national level supports the nation as an imagined community.

While Anderson's nation consists of individuals who may never have had face-to-face contact, Rappaport's narrative suggests a smaller group that does have face to face contact (Anderson 6; Rappaport 803). Although in Egypt's case the narrative of living history being discussed is one that concerns an entire nation and is shared by people who may not know each other, and in this sense is more of an "imagined" narrative than a strictly communal one, Rappaport's research is still relevant to this case. We can extend Rappaport's "communal narrative" as a resource for empowerment to Benedict's scale of an "imagined" national narrative, imagined in this case meaning that it stretches over a temporal and not

just geographical span. The collective Egyptian imagination renews a sense of national identity by creatively reviving historical narratives of social and cultural memory in the present.

Rappaport's research ties together this discussion of historical narratives as a "cultural resource," marginalized narratives of social and cultural memory, and the relation between having access to collective narratives and empowerment (Meskell 150).[6] Rappaport uses the general definition of empowerment given by the Cornell Empowerment Group: "an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community…through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources" (802). Rappaport explicitly states that "The ability to tell one's story, and to have access to and influence over collective stories, is a powerful resource"; thus he identifies narratives as a "valued resourc[e]" which empowerment helps people to "gain access to and control over" (802). Elsewhere he states that "helping people to identify, create, and tell their own stories, individually and collectively, is an endeavor consistent with the development of empowerment" (Rappaport 802). This is precisely what the Mohammad Mahmoud murals do, in the sense that they tell the stories of individuals in a way that translates to the rest of society by drawing on social and cultural memory as a framework for interpretation, creating a new collective narrative in which people can identify their own stories. According to Rappaport, "it is very clear that stories…have a powerful effect on human behavior. They tell us not only who we are but who we have been and who we can be. There is a great deal of evidence, from many different disciplines, to show that narratives create meaning, emotion, memory, and identity" (796). The meanings and emotions expressed in the murals of Mohammad Mahmoud evoke social and cultural memory and a sense of identity. This memory attaches meaning and emotion to a narrative of identity or origins that doesn't have a fixed but rather evolving meaning.

Thus Rappaport's narratives are similar to Anderson's nationalism in their ability to stimulate emotion and a sense of identity, but Rappaport is concerned with marginalized, not dominant narratives, and people's ability to access communal narratives and collectively control and use them. That is, he doesn't take for granted that all individuals have the opportunity to express themselves through collective narratives, and he focuses on this

access to communal narratives as the pivotal point through which to understand how narratives can affect society and human behavior (Rappaport 796, 799, 804). This will be important to understand just how the Mohammad Mahmoud Street murals, as marginalized narratives seeking to become national ones, were able to bring about actual social and political effects. Finally, his research is focused not necessarily on nation-building so much as empowering the voices of a community, which allows us to view the expressions of living history on Mohammad Mahmoud Street as not only having a nationalistic intent but rather one closer to the heart of the Egyptian, that is to uplift every individual's story to create a narrative that both individually and collectively empowers.

Rappaport in his research discusses the importance of communal narratives for personal and collective empowerment, specifically in the context of sustaining life changes: "People who seek either personal or community change often find that it is very difficult to sustain change without the support of a collectivity that provides a communal narrative around which they can sustain changes in their own personal story" (796). The narratives on these walls are at once collective and personal; that is, they intertwine collective narratives with personal stories (i.e. faces and names of the martyrs), raising the individual and empowering and sustaining collective changes in the nation. At the personal level, the Revolution caused many changes in Egyptians' lives – positive or negative, and often overwhelming. In one case a young man described how watching his friend die in the Revolution had a powerful and lasting effect on his life: "When he was alive I would see him every day in the Square, but after he died I would see him in my mind everywhere" (Hussain). At the time the piece was written in May 2012 he was still not able to walk through the Square, "the memories…being too much for him to bear" (Hussain). The murals of Muhammad Mahmoud commemorating the martyrs not only offer solace and healing, but also sustain the changes in the lives of people like this young man by providing a narrative that can help them to ascribe some meaning to these difficult experiences in order to take the first steps towards envisioning a future ("Visualizing Revolution").[7]

Many material artifacts and records remain on Egyptian history to which all Egyptians have a right as a collective and cultural resource, yet not only for this reason does the irrevocable loss of the Institute and the

documents it housed not mean that all is hopeless. Not only is this present moment particularly an important time for history to be recovered from cultural and social memory, but also an important moment in which history can be restored to the people as living history ("Visualizing Revolution"). Egyptians are the living form of their history, and as such they have more potential to influence society for their own good than that history which was locked away in the Institute ever did. Although the fire led to a grievous loss, perhaps even more catastrophic for Egyptians than it was for the rest of the world, what matters for Egypt's future is the history that the public gains access to, whether it resides in cultural and social memory or in material artifact, and how they manage to use it. Certainly this is a moment for Egyptians to reassert themselves as the vanguard of their own history.

Many observers consider the Egyptian Revolution to be a fresh start for Egypt, a new era of Egyptian history that seeks to disconnect itself from the past. And yet there is evidence to suggest that post-Revolution Egypt (that is, post-Mubarak Egypt) is in fact rediscovering its history, in both recorded historical knowledge and in what resides in the imagination. In the aftermath of the (ongoing) Egyptian Revolution that began in 2011, as Egyptians begin to rebuild their society, the Egyptian people have invested in reclaiming their connection to their various histories (Islamic, Coptic, and Pharaonic), particularly through some astounding street art murals on Mohammad Mahmoud Street near Tahrir Square (Abaza, "Walls" 131; Durham, "Tomb of Tahrir"; Mousa). Mohammad Mahmoud Street was the site of violent clashes from November 2011 to February 2012, and many protestors were killed or seriously injured (Abaza "Emerging Memorial Space"; "Walls" 129). A few Egyptian fine arts professors from Luxor, Ammar Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad, along with other Egyptian artists, went to Mohammad Mahmoud Street and began painting murals on the walls of the buildings lining the street (Hussein, "The Epic Murals").

The creation of this art is part of the creation of living history on the street. These murals were not recordings of protests in isolation from the protests themselves: Abu Bakr and others created the murals during the protests, alternating between throwing rocks and painting (Suzeeinthecity, "Madness"). Thus these murals are historical narratives created

by the energy in the street in the moment that history itself was still being defined. The purpose that they came to serve in the context of their creation is that of a continually evolving historical narrative. This mural reclaims history for the living imagination, and through its special location on this street which is also an active protest site, it literally re-situates history as a context for daily life, political action, and social transformation. An intra-painting reading of Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad's murals reveal how social and cultural memory have the power to create a historical narrative that reconnects people meaningfully with their past, a rich resource from which they can draw inspiration and dignity. This historical narrative likewise restores people with a sense of their own agency as living history. This the mural accomplishes by inviting participation from the street, empowering individuals, and legitimizing their existence in the face of state structures that often neglect or persecute individuals with very little power to resist and whose only crime is their existence.

From the outset the artists were motivated by the idea of both reviving and renewing the past in the present using the collective imagination and of using narratives of living history as a resource for empowerment. A spokesperson at a panel discussion of the artists who initiated the mural project said that they hoped that from their murals "conversations about the future of Egypt will be creatively reengaged to overcome the disappointments [of the Revolution] that settled in late last year" ("Visualizing Revolution"). The artists' stated intentions were to create something like a tomb space on Mohammad Mahmoud Street where friends and families of the martyred could come and pray and remember their loved ones ("The Epic Murals"). Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad painted a mural with the martyrs' faces, amidst pharaonic funeral scenes inspired by those on real tombs in Luxor (Durham "Khawaga"; "Tomb of Tahrir"; Hussein). However, these images are not intended to simply re-create the street as a tomb space. According to Egyptologist Mariam Ayad, "It's not…a superimposition of the content. There's really a full integration and internalization of the content, so…they have this added layer of meaning to them" (Durham; "Tomb of Tahrir"). She also notes that the murals are "more relevant and emotionally engaging than…the walls of the tombs of Luxor" (Durham "Tomb of Tahrir").

The use of pharaonic art lends the Revolution old, familiar tools to build a new narrative, just as the Revolution gives the pharaonic symbols and motifs used in the murals a fresh relevance and urgency. Abu Bakr in particular denied that the murals served any aesthetic purpose at all, claiming that they were entirely political, designed to portray the concerns of the people on the street at the moment, which calls on us to read the art seriously for its political messages and not simply as aesthetic decoration (Durham, "Tomb of Tahrir," "The Epic Murals"; Mousa). In one narrative sequence, first there is an apparently courtly scene where a rat-like king receives the people as an offering from a cat while slaves (representing the then newly-elected parliament) bow down in front of him (Durham, "Khawaga"; "Visualizing Revolution"). This perhaps is suggestive of the bloated and fake power of Egypt's past and present leaders, in addition to the corrupt dynamics of Egypt's past and present governments. Towards the left of this scene is what looks like a confused battle scene (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial"). Further on are ancient Egyptian women protestors, and on their left a different scene of warriors climbing a wall supposedly to storm a fortress (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial"; Durham, "Khawaga"; "Gallery"). This scene is reminiscent of the walls that the Egyptian army had erected on several streets around Tahrir Square which the people eventually broke down (Abaza "Walls," 128). The bodies of the protesting women are noticeably completely turned away from the rat-king court and they are gesturing towards and looking up to the warriors climbing the wall. This suggests that the Revolution is not over even now that a new parliament is elected, and that the revolutionaries don't see parliament as their true leaders. Compared to the slaves in parliament, the revolutionaries are stronger and more dignified. One of the warriors also looks back in the direction of the women as he climbs the wall. The women appear strong and determined, walking in even rows and holding what looks like sticks or weapons. The outstretched hand of one of the protesting women overlaps with and reaches into the fortress-storming scene, suggesting the women and the men are engaged in a shared, understood resistance. The hand of the woman points the reader of this narrative towards the warriors, as they become the climax of this sequence from court, to battle, to the protesting women, and finally to the warriors who storm the fortress of power, this fortress possibly protecting the same court depicted at the beginning of the sequence (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial").

Though Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad made use of tomb art that was meant to be eternal, when they incorporate it into street art it becomes ephemeral (though in fact, it has resisted erasure because of the "curse of the Pharaohs") (Durham "Tomb of Tahrir"; Abaza "Emerging Memorial Space"). Nevertheless, its ephemerality as street art changes its nature and the way we think about these paintings on the street compared to in the tomb. On the street these tomb paintings transform from static testaments of the past to part of the living, changing history of Egypt. The ephemerality of these paintings points to the central role of social and cultural memory in passing down history from generation to generation. Although someday Egyptians will no longer be able to see or may even forget the paintings that existed on these walls, the internalization of these narratives in social and cultural memory will allow the Revolution to remain alive in the Egyptian national imagination long after records and artifacts of the Revolution have disappeared.

What makes these murals different from the historical documents housed in the Institute d'Egypt is that the rich cultural legacies and symbolic narratives left behind by ancient Egyptians are rendered here as belonging to present day Egyptians to use as a common resource and draw upon for inspiration. The murals were created intentionally to do so. As one of the mural artists Hanaa Degham said, "When you walk into an Ancient Egyptian tomb, it is a place where you would feel relief . . . And you would feel it was as if that was the real home of the Ancient Egyptian" (Durham, "Tomb of Tahrir"; "Visualizing Revolution"). Thus tombs are a place where Egyptians can feel their ancestors and connect with them on an emotional level. Bringing this tomb into the street, the latter being the "home" of the present day Egyptian, has the effect of blurring the lines between the home of the Ancient Egyptian and the present day Egyptian. This was achieved by the artists' creative use of pharaonic symbols and motifs. The symbols and motifs used in the pharaonic scenes have their own meanings in ancient Egyptian art, but in the murals they both elevate recent history and are elevated by their associations with recent history to new meanings ("Visualizing Revolution"). In the mural described above the warriors from ancient Egyptian history are recast as the protestors from the Revolution, and the rat king is similar to either a Mubarak or a

Tantawi, and thus these scenes and the narratives surrounding them gain potency as a narrative of the present, living, breathing Egypt.

In these murals there is stark evidence of the interweaving of Islamic and ancient Egyptian, as well as peasant, art, an alliance that would baffle Meskell's archaeologists or self-proclaimed experts such as Walsh. Above Alaa Awad's protesting women Abu Bakr painted a Buraq, an Islamic mythological creature, symbolizing both freedom and a state of in-between, in the style of the rural peasants (Abaza, "Buraqs"). In another scene in this mural, martyrs from Port Said ascending to heaven on angels' wings are interspersed with mourning ancient Egyptian women sending a soul in a sarcophagus up to heaven (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial"; "Walls" 131–32). The merging of ancient Egyptian and monotheistic (whether Islamic or Christian) religions in Egyptian art is not by any means new but is actually quite common, though often ignored by outside observers (Meskell 147, 162–64). In the particular situational location of this art, out on the street in modern-day Muslim Egypt, there is an even more powerful merging of ancient Egyptian religion with a living street informed by Islamic sensibilities. These murals were prayed in front of and defended by the people on the street (El Deeb; Hussain; "Visualizing Revolution"). Where are Meskell's archaeologists now to claim that modern-day Egyptian Muslims are disinterested in ancient Egyptian art? Where is Walsh's "horde of Muslim[s]," supposedly bent on destroying culture that isn't Islamic?

The history that resides in the imagination has the power to transform how an individual sees him or herself and how a society sees itself. Abu Bakr sees the very act of making these street murals as a defense of the identity, of the people's claim to all their heritages, Islamic, Coptic, and Ancient Egyptian (Mousa; "The Epic Murals"). Closeness to one's identity grounds a person with a sense of his or her own legitimacy and thus social agency. On a societal level, these murals surround the suffering of society with an aura of reverence in a context in which Egyptians for so long have been deprived of any sense of respect, dignity, independence, and agency. Morayef in her blog, *Suzeeinthecity,* draws connections between the whitewashing of the murals and the lack of justice both for the martyrs of the 2011 January-February Revolution and for those of Port Said ("Art of Movement"). She says, "what we have lost was a beautiful work of art;

what we have gained is fresh fury and ignited debate" (Suzeeinthecity, "Art of Movement"). Thus by suggestion the murals have the capacity to re-instill Egyptians with a sense of their dignity and their right to seek justice. Specific examples of how this occurs in the murals include a funeral scene of mourning ancient Egyptian women, who are artistically and culturally revered both in Egypt and globally, passing their dignity onto their descendants as they raise the Revolution's martyrs to heaven. Ancient Egyptian women in particular use their influential collective "voice" to express sympathy and support for the mothers of the martyrs, whose images Abu Bakr later layered on top of this same mural, a commentary on the respect that present-day Egyptian women deserve (Hussain; Suzeeinthecity "Presidential Elections"). From the warriors climbing the wall to the women walking determinedly ahead, these images from ancient Egyptian art recast present day Egyptians as people who belong to the noble history of Egypt. A powerful message in this mural to an Egyptian is: you're part of this narrative and these ancient rituals are for you because you deserve to claim your heritage as part of your cultural and social memory and to be remembered with the same dignity as your ancestors.

Rappaport notes that narratives offered by collective support groups are only part of the process of empowerment (804). What makes these narratives powerful is that they allow people to use them to "sustain change" on the individual and community level, for example by offering "role opportunities, new identities, and possible selves" (796, 804). Lord and Hutchison, professors who have researched extensively how to make communities more inclusive of the vulnerable and disabled, state this even more directly, citing Wolfensberger: "The literature supports this idea that in order for people to become empowered, they not only need access to valued social resources, but also to valued social roles" (16). Therefore the ability of the Mohammad Mahmoud murals to empower the people also depends on their ability to offer individuals avenues for meaningful participation that makes them believe in their own potential.

The purpose of the murals was also to portray inspiring messages and narratives that would provoke the national imagination and spur the people to political action (Mousa; "The Epic Murals"; "Visualizing Revolution"). A spokesperson for the artists, who initiated the mural project, reflected that "public art provokes debate, reflection, and a new threshold

of imagination among the public as much as the artists" ("Visualizing the Revolution"). The murals as they were being created invited participation from the street. The bright colors and fantastic drawings invited people to stop, think, and comment on the drawings and to follow the narrative sequences and the symbols with their potent meanings ("The Epic Murals"). And yet the street also became a place that stimulated political discussion. People gathered around and talked with strangers about the Revolution and politics and "overwhelm[ed]" the artists with questions about the political meanings of their works (Abaza "Emerging Memorial"; Mousa; "The Epic Murals"; "Visualizing the Revolution"). People also participated in the painting that was recreating narratives of their social and cultural memory by volunteering to paint and bringing supplies (Durham, "Khawaga Walk"; Hussain; Nguyen).

The murals provided people with ways to participate in ways that both empowered them and sustained the changes that had been brought about in their lives during the Revolution by inspiring them to return to the streets in defense of the murals and all that they stood for (Mousa; "The Epic Murals"). In other words, these murals were narratives that brought about empowerment in the sense of Rappaport's description of narratives as a resource for "sustain[ing] change" and Lord and Hutchinson's description of empowerment as requiring "valued social roles" (Rappaport 796; Lord and Hutchinson 16). The people were instrumental to halting the whitewashing of the Mohammad Mahmoud Street murals ordered by the interim SCAF government and were the ones who repainted the walls, sometimes even as the army screamed at them and while the police took photos of them for possible later arrests (Hussain; Suzeeinthecity, "Art of Movement"). The people experienced these images not necessarily as imposed upon them, but rather as created and destroyed in time, works that were in themselves "acts of protest" (Mousa). Furthermore, art itself inspired protest (Mousa; Suzeeinthecity, "Art of Movement"). After the whitewashing of the walls of Mohammad Mahmoud Street in fall 2012, two thousand protestors returned to repaint the walls (Mousa). Thus the people felt ownership of their walls and the drawings which they created and provided the inspiration for with their own blood, sweat, and tears ("Visualizing Revolution"). The narratives of the people displayed in these murals gave people a cause to fight for, and

this outpouring of protest helped sustain the Revolution. Both the narratives themselves and the acts of creating and defending them gave people a sense of who they were and who they could become.

Living history and its binding thread of social and cultural memory resists all attempts at its erasure because of its flexibility that incorporates all violence inflicted on it back into its narrative, refreshing or creating variations on older symbols to instill them with current significance ("Visualizing the Revolution"). Whitewashing was widely seen as an effort to make the people "forget what happened," or in other words to erase a narrative of history that the army found threatening to its power and to allow for a more "official" narrative of history to replace living history in the public consciousness (El Deeb; El-Din; Hussain; Suzeeinthecity "Art of Movement").[8] Thus the act of erasing the people's narrative of living history prompted participation through resistance and the recreation of new narratives on the whitened walls, narratives that could be seen as reformulations of the narratives of before, but whose meanings evolved with every new painting as they were integrated into the current political situation on the street ("Visualizing the Revolution"). (See, for example, Suzeeandthecity's "The Revolution Continues" and "Art of Movement," for the returning symbols of Khaled Said and Mubarak, and see also Hussain).

The ability of Egyptian people to give voice to their own narratives and to use their history as a tool for empowerment is central to the cause of the Revolution itself, a breaking-free from colonialism and neocolonialism as well as from Egypt's oppressive rulers. Rappaport states that "who controls that resource [narratives], that is who gives stories social value, is at the heart of a tension between freedom and social control, oppression and liberation, and empowerment versus disenfranchisement" (805). This reminds us of the previous discussion of how the monopoly of historical artifacts and claims of expertise in Egyptian history allowed colonizing powers to subjugate the Egyptian people, and of how the Western-controlled narrative of ancient Egypt was designed to isolate and deny Egyptian people's narratives of social and cultural memory. And yet the murals-as-narrative fights against the state's narrative that has delegitimized and disenfranchised the Revolution and many of Egypt's most vulnerable people. Particularly, the presence of pharaonic art on the street serves to counter the oppressiveness of the state. When people

hired by the state came and white-washed the walls, they left untouched the pharaonic scenes out of fear and respect for the powerful beliefs that present day Egyptians still retain regarding the pharaohs (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial Space"). Pharaonic art serves to counter the efforts of the state to delegitimize the protest movement, but also in a larger sense renders legitimate the various people from all swathes of Egyptian society whose existence has been either explicitly rendered illegitimate or ignored, marginalized, and oppressed to the point that existence is nearly impossible. Nawal Mahmoud Hassan's study from the late seventies documents the plight of people whose housing either collapsed or was demolished and who were forced to move into nearby historical monuments (Hassan 134–35). When the government decided to refurbish these monuments for tourism purposes, they forcibly evicted the residents and only gave some of them makeshift places to live, ignoring the fact that many more families were now on the streets (Hassan 135, 139). A more recent case of extreme marginalization is that of the Zabaleen, whose livelihood is based on a sustainable garbage recycling system that benefits the city, and yet the state for many years has been planning to evict them in order to pursue development (Fahmi 24–5, 36–7). During the Mohammad Mahmoud Street clashes of 2011, the army erected barriers throughout downtown Cairo in order to create violent zones that contained and isolated the protestors and made it easier for the army to inflict injuries on them, and in addition made daily life nearly impossible for the residents (Abaza, "Walls" 126–28). In this brief glimpse of the way the state often oppresses the people to the point that their right to exist is threatened, the murals, which are made for the people and created for the purpose of giving them a voice, are an assertion of the right of the people to collectively have a presence on the street, and to be recognized by the state as having the right to exist ("Visualizing Revolution"). A people's claim to ownership of its heritage is necessary to claim the land of their ancestors, and therefore the mural's assertion that the public are the descendants and heirs of their ancestors, ancient Egyptians, in the most public of places, is a powerful reclaiming of the people's right to exist in their land.

Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad, well studied in the art of ancient Egypt, bring this art and this history to the streets, free-handedly painting pharaonic art scenes that are remarkably similar to their originals on the walls of

ancient Egyptian tombs (Hussein). Not only have they been steeped in the study of ancient Egyptian art, but they have internalized its spirit, imparting that spirit to the passersby on the street through their murals. The free-handed aspect of Abu Bakr and Alaa Awad's pharaonic paintings and the internalization of the spirit of their ancestors' art speaks to the power of living history that goes beyond the mere ability to collect, catalogue, and preserve, but rather allows that history to be carried on into the present and to become ever richer with meaning as it is constantly reinvoked in everyday life. The interweaving of past and present, mourning ancient Egyptian women with veiled mothers mourning their martyred sons, is a testament to the fact that the spirit of ancient Egypt still lives among present day Egyptians. These murals attest to the fact that the society of Walsh's "horde of Muslim rioters" contains deep echoes of and can attach relevance to the supposedly "annihilated piece of history" that lives on not only as a cultural resource that can shed meaning on the present day, but also as the very thing that binds and drives Egyptian society through the tumultuous waves of its history.

Notes

1. Winegar in her study "Cultural Sovereignty in a Global Art Economy: Egyptian Cultural Policy and the New Western Interest in Art in the Middle East," discusses artistic and curatorial expertise and what constitutes it as an area of contestation between Western-educated and Egyptian state curators (186). Many Western curators visit Egypt with little respect for the "local construction[s] of [artistic and curatorial] expertise" (based on age and institution, for example), and assume that without a Western education in contemporary art, Egyptian officials in the Ministry of Culture do not know how to run a museum or a gallery (188-89). Winegar explicitly states that American professors and curators who visit Egypt have reminded not just local officials but also Egyptian students of "colonial administrators" (189).

2. Ancient Egyptian history is often claimed with the most human intentions as "global heritage." See Walsh, mentioned later, as well as a discussion on Lawrence Auster's blog post on View From the Right (see Works Cited) in which one of the discussants, "LA", comments: "What if an Islamic Egyptian regime set about destroying . . . the ancient Egyptian

monuments? Ancient Egypt is a heritage belonging to the entire world. I think we would have to take some action to stop that."

3. See comment by "Paul T." on Lawrence Auster's blog: "we'd be wrong to prevent it [the destruction of cultural artifacts in another country]. Though if some far-seeing colonial administrator of long ago had anticipated that the country would one day be under Islamic control, and for that reason had removed every moveable artifact of the Pharaohs to the West, that would in retrospect have been best."

4. Meskell notes the endurance of ancient Egyptian history among the "living people and their traditions" but she focuses her evidence for this mainly on architectural design and monuments (162, 164, 167). I feel that since the 2011 Revolution there is much more evidence suddenly available that allows us to deepen and expand the argument for the endurance of ancient Egypt in the living history of present-day Egypt. Particularly the Revolution has given us an opportunity to examine how living history is evident not just in the urban landscape but among the people themselves who have been constantly making, changing, and interacting with the politico-historical street art produced in the city since 2011.

5. Rappaport's research pertains to community psychology and concerns using narrative theory to advance research on empowerment by including communal narratives and individual stories as data in empowerment research and thus "privileging the voices of the people studied" (801). This echoes Meskell's critique of current archaeological practice that "privileg[es] the ancient past and ignor[es] Egypt's more recent heritage" (147). Rappaport further argues that "giving respect to the stories of people's lives tends in itself to be an experience that changes the role relationship from researcher and subject to coparticipants" (801). This seems to provide the answer to one point that was missing in Meskell's article, which is what theoretical resources archaeologists can use to make their work more inclusive of the local population. When Meskell discusses possible changes that are needed in archaeological practice, such as "the inclusion of smaller voices," "engag[ing] in dialogue" with those affected by archaeological practice, and "learn[ing] from the Egyptians and their unique experience" what she is really talking about is applying narrative theory to archaeological practice in order to empower local citizens and their voices (148, 162).

6. I came across these articles during my research in an article by Hani M. Henry entitled: "Egyptian Women and Empowerment: A Cultural Perspective" that discusses the constraints Egyptian women face in the home and the actions they take to change their situation. The issue of gender in the household is a complex one in Egyptian society (see also Development, Change, and Gender in Cairo: A View from the Household, edited by Diane Singerman and Homa Hoodfar, Introduction p. xxi-xxii and Ch. 1-2) and not necessarily within the scope of this paper. However, it is important to note that empowerment occurs at all levels of society, and is not necessarily confined to the public sphere or the street alone. In addition, empowerment as it is typically thought of in the West does not transfer so easily into Egyptian society and therefore the empowerment I discuss here particularly as it relates to women adheres to Rappaport's discussion of empowerment but does not necessarily connote Western ideas of empowering or "liberating" women. Rappaport discusses how empowerment is a situation-specific phenomenon that has "several different forms" (797). He talks about how empowerment is an idea that cuts across different ideologies, and that "settings that are empowering for some people may be the ones whose values and goals we do not like" (798). This can be applied here in the sense that Westerners may dismiss the form empowerment takes in the Egyptian context as instead oppression or disempowerment simply because it conflicts with Western values and goals. Rappaport hopes that "we will also learn to listen to the voices of the people with whom we work so as to allow them to tell us what it means to be empowered in their particular context" [my emphasis] (799). I can only touch upon the common ground definition of empowerment here and how this definition supports the assertion that the Mohammad Mahmoud murals are a source of empowerment, but I like to stick to Zimmerman's idea, cited by Rappaport, of empowerment as an "open construct" that Egyptians must provide the meaning of (802).

7. Rappaport writes that people often seek mutual help organizations because they often "find that change cannot be sustained in the absence of a group that supports that change, in part through the experience of a shared community narrative" (804). These organizations provide a "new community narrative" and "people provide social and emotional support, and offer one another new ways to think and talk about themselves" (804). The informal "organization" of people who came to Mohammad

Mahmoud Street to participate in the graffiti can be thought of as an informal mutual help organization. The narratives expressed in the graffiti drawings, the connections of powerful ancient Egyptian narratives to present day revolutionary ones, helped provide a new collective narrative that renewed the meanings of cultural symbols of ancient history in social and cultural memory and brought the depth of cultural and social memory to the fresh memories and personal experiences of the revolution. In this way the graffiti offered people a grounding historical narrative to help people cope as they were still reeling from the personal and social changes that had taken place in their lives, and it offered them an activity that could bring people together for both political discussion and the sharing of memories from the revolution (Abaza, "Emerging Memorial; Mousa; "The Epic Murals").

8. Also see Suzeeinthecity's post "In the Midst of Madness" to see her comment on the Mohammad Mahmoud murals created after the Port Said Massacre as "profound and essential" to the "society's collective consciousness." Forgetting the past is a theme used ironically by the artists themselves. During the hype of the elections in June 2012, Ammar Abu Bakr painted over his own mural to write "Forget what has passed and focus on the elections instead" amidst the portraits of mothers still grieving their martyred children (Suzeeinthecity, "Presidential Elections"). Thus the contestation for the survival of the people's narrative of living history is an explicit struggle of the revolution constantly being played out in the public sphere, and it becomes a contest over the public's consciousness.

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From the Writer

My decision to write this essay began with a self-exploratory question: what was it about Marcus Zusak's *The Book Thief,* Etgar Keret's "Cocked and Locked," and the film School Ties that I found so gripping? The answer, it turns out, came to me only days before my first draft was due; all three narratives deal rather explicitly with Jewish understandings of what constitutes victory and defeat for men. As a Jewish man, these are concepts that affect me deeply, so engaging with them on a more intense intellectual level has been quite enjoyable. Though "Cocked and Locked" didn't make the final cut, it remains one of the most fascinating pieces of literature I've ever read and its influence on my thought in this paper is immeasurable.

— Levi Mastrangelo

Levi Mastrangelo

Oscillating Narratives of 20th-Century Jewish Masculinity

> The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished.
>
> The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?[1]
>
> —Mark Twain

The answer to Twain's question may lie in an article called "The Stories that Bind Us," recently published in *The New York Times*, in which Bruce Feiler reports on sociological research into the role that family narratives play in child development..[2] Feiler's article focuses on a study conducted by Dr. Marshall Duke of Emory University that points to strong family narrative as a key factor in a child's ability to confront adversity. According to Feiler, Duke's research shows that children who know more about their family's history are more likely to be emotionally healthy.[3] Moreover, Feiler reported that, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks—a trauma common to all of the research subjects—children in Duke's study

"who knew more about their families proved to be more resilient, meaning they could moderate the effects of stress."[4] The most durable narratives, according to Duke, are what he calls "oscillating narratives," which feature both ascending and descending themes, vignettes about both acquisition of accolades and endurance of hardship. According to Rabbi Ben Greenberg, this article made its way around the rabbi-listservs in the weeks following its publication because it confirms through sociology something that Jews have understood for a long time: that oscillating narratives preserve the core of identity while stimulating its development.[5]

The oscillating narrative, it seems, is the answer to Twain's question. The Jew appears perdurable because Jewish identity stems from just such an oscillating narrative, one that is concretely rooted simultaneously in the endurance of hardship and in an infinitely effervescent triumph over it. In 1898—when Twain published the essay from which the epigraph is taken—the Jewish narrative had indeed already transcended a great deal. However, even as he wrote words of such reverence for Jewish survival, that very survival was beginning to face a threat of the highest magnitude. The Jewish narrative was entering a chapter of suspense, climax, and change, the likes of which it had previously endured only twice before. The first of those major threats is described in the tale of the exodus from Egypt. It is an oscillating narrative: on the one hand, its primary characteristic is an ascending shift from slavery and wandering to freedom and stability; on the other, it is marred by hardship and countless blemishes—e.g., the golden calf, the rebellion of Korach, the twelve spies. The second major threat to Jewish existence came with the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. This narrative also oscillates, counterbalancing the descent into the depression of exile with the shift to a resilient Judaism governed by the Rabbis. This shift roughly coincided with a turn in Western civilization, from the paganism of the Greeks and Romans to the monotheism of Christians and Muslims. In 1898, at the time of Twain's writing, the third threat was already brewing. It too was accompanied by a shift in Western civilization, as Europe discarded Christianity in favor of secular values stemming from the Enlightenment. This change bolstered existing theological justifications of European anti-Semitism with racial ones, creating a powerful and distinctly modern anti-Semitism that, in the years shortly to come, would manifest in the Holocaust. This historical period of change

will also most likely be narrated in oscillation, as the splendor of the Jewish ascension from second-class citizenship in exile to emancipated prosperity and a return to Israel is attenuated by the sobering recognition that violence has pervaded this history.

Judaism survived in the wake of all three pivotal eras, it can be argued, because Jews recomposed their collective identity into oscillating narratives. Gender constructs, because they heavily inform individual identity, are amongst the more important of those narratives. In Western civilization's shift from Christianity to secularism, constructs of masculinity became particularly important because Jewish man had been the chief target of Christian othering—that is, the process by which mainstream discourse attempts to create minority identity on a minority's behalf, without their choice or willing participation—but was newly expected to adhere to Western civilization's more standard expectations. In this paper, I will explore two narratives about the Jewish man's emancipation from otherness, paying particular attention to how that otherness complicated Jewish man's understanding of victory and defeat. The first portrayal of Jewish manhood that I will treat is the Jewish character, Max Vandenburg, in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*.[6] Zusak's work illustrates how utilizing classic understandings of victory and defeat can be detrimental to the Jewish man. Next, I will analyze the 1992 film *School Ties*[7] in its rendering of the Jewish man's predicament as he went through the process of manumission from otherness. *School Ties* forms the complement to *The Book Thief*, demonstrating how—by acquiescing to subjugations of their pride and dignity—Jewish men enabled themselves to attain success.

Before moving forward with my analysis of *The Book Thief* and *School Ties*, however, I will provide a brief preface, describing and distinguishing between the respective anti-Semitisms of the historical periods that these pieces portray. Up until the Enlightenment, Christian doctrine had been the primary source of European anti-Semitism; one might even have expected that when the Enlightenment shifted European intellectual culture away from Christianity, anti-Semitism would have withered. However, anti-Semitism was so ingrained in European culture that it persisted and was actually bolstered by new justifications; theological othering was replaced by racial othering.[8] *The Book Thief* is set in Nazi Germany, where this "new anti-Semitism" of modern Europe reached its pinnacle, where

the government victimized Jews in order to mitigate the threat that they posed to German racial purity. *School Ties*, by contrast, is set in the U.S. during the 1950s, where anti-Semitism was slowly being phased out of the social structure.[9] It is important to note that, as a result of this difference between the anti-Semitism portrayed in these two works, the kinds of success that David (the protagonist of *School Ties*) achieves would not have been possible for Max. I therefore qualify that my argument speaks only to the general effect that these various kinds of othering have on contemporary understandings of Jewish masculinity.

The Book Thief is a novel that follows the developmental years of Liesel Meminger—a foster child living in Nazi Germany. Though Zusak's work focuses primarily on Liesel's enthrallment with literature, it also incidentally addresses issues of Jewish masculinity through Max, a Jew who also gets taken in by Liesel's foster parents, the Hubermanns. Our first introduction to Max comes in a chapter aptly named "Enter the Struggler."[10] In this chapter we get only the slightest glimpse of Max, hiding in a dark, cramped storage room, struggling to maintain his wits despite being confined. His concealer enters, delivering minimal sustenance and, hidden in a book, Max's means for reaching his next destination: a forged identity card, a map, instructions, and a key. Zusak goes to great lengths to give us no hint of this person's identity, offering only, "The door was opened and shut, and a figure was crouched over him."[11] This description shows us how completely downtrodden Max is. Even this nameless, faceless, crouching figure is in a position of power over him, coming across as some sort of reluctant captor: "There was no apology. 'It's the best I could do.' Door open, door shut. Alone again."[12] Moreover, Zusak's unwillingness to give the concealer an identity points apophatically to the depth of Max's dehumanization: by leaving the concealer completely anonymous, Zusak draws our attention to Max as singularly human in his suffering. Forcing the reader to focus on Max's humanity is Zusak's only avenue for depicting Max with even the slightest modicum of dignity: "To your left, perhaps your right, perhaps even straight ahead, you find a small black room. In it sits a Jew. He is scum. He is starving. He is afraid. Please—try not to look away."[13] Already, we begin to see the formation of a complex victory-defeat dynamic in which the Jew's humanity rests upon his suffering.

The next time we encounter Max, he is traveling from his old hiding place in Stuttgart to suburban Munich, where the Hubermanns live.[14] In order to make the journey safely, Max has taken to traveling in the open, assuming the guise of a typical German. To succeed in masking himself, however, Max must shave his beard because it clearly identifies him as Jewish. The emotional impact of this adjustment is hefty, prompting Max to bid his beard a verbal "goodbye."[15] Max completes his disguise with reading material for the train ride, the book containing the means for travel—*Mein Kampf*. The irony is supreme: in order to survive Max must read the very book that, by labeling his otherness as a racial phenomenon, inspired people to put his life in danger. The tense discomfort of this contrast is so palpable that Zusak must acknowledge it directly: "Strangely, as [Max] turned the pages and progressed through the chapters, it was only two words he ever tasted. *Mein Kampf*. My struggle. […] *Mein Kampf*. Of all the things to save him."[16] In both of these cases, we find that Max has once again taken on lesser defeats in order to ensure the greater "victory" of survival.

Later in the book we find out more about Max's childhood, discovering that he has a fighter's spirit.[17] At first, this character trait is about physical fighting; it is simple, testosterone-driven, masculine bloodlust: "A trickle of blood was dripping from Max's mouth. He tasted it, and it tasted good."[18] The dual aspect of this fighting spirit is then revealed when financial hardships force him and his mother to move in with his uncle.[19] A foil for Max, his uncle is the stereotypical Jew, "the type of person who worked quietly away for very little reward. He kept to himself and sacrificed everything for his family."[20] His death has a profound impact on Max: "As he watched his uncle sink slowly into the bed, he decided that he would never allow himself to die like that. […] Where's the fight? he wondered. Where's the will to hold on?"[21] Despite Max's harsh condemnation of his uncle's character, his death is portrayed as ideal: "The Man's face was so accepting. […] (He) appeared relieved when his breathing disappeared completely."[22]

Max's bravado and willingness to fight is contrasted with his uncle's timidity, not only in action but also in result. While his uncle is rewarded with a tranquil death, Max's warrior mentality leaves him in a state of futility. This is perhaps most apparent when, while hiding in the Huber-

manns' basement, Max envisions himself boxing with Hitler.[23] Max's fantasy begins with introductions. Hitler is built-up externally: robed in a swastika and attended by an entourage, Hitler is touted by the ringmaster as an undefeated fighter.[24] Max, by contrast, is the embodiment of fragility, "a lonely young Jew with dirty breath, a naked chest, and tired hands and feet."[25] Notice how in Max's own fantasy Hitler's might and bravado are idealized. Max has come as a challenger to attain this powerful glory for himself; he seeks victory by Hitler's standards. As the fight begins, Max imagines how Hitler would establish his superiority: "There was only one round, and it lasted hours, and for the most part, nothing changed. The *Fuhrer* pounded away at the punching-bag Jew. Jewish blood was everywhere."[26] After being beaten to the floor, Max draws upon his fist-fighter mentality; rallying, he refuses to go quietly like his uncle:

> Slowly, Max Vandenburg, the Jew, rose to his feet and made himself upright. His voice wobbled. An invitation. "Come on *Fuhrer*," he said, and this time, when Adolf Hitler set upon his Jewish counterpart, Max stepped aside and plunged him into the corner. He punched him seven times, aiming on each occasion for only one thing.
>
> The mustache.
>
> […] All at once Hitler hit the ropes and creased forward, landing on his knees. This time there was no count. The referee flinched in the corner. The audience sank down, back to their beer.[27]

At this point, Max loses control of his own fantasy; his minor victory results in a major defeat:

> On his knees, the *Fuhrer* tested himself for blood and straightened his hair, right to left. When he returned to his feet, much to the approval of the thousand-strong crowd, he edged forward and did something quite strange. He turned his back on the Jew and took the gloves from his fists. […]
>
> […] within moments, Adolf Hitler was standing on the ropes, and he was addressing the arena.

> "My fellow Germans," he called, "you can see something here tonight, can't you?" Bare-chested, victory-eyed, he pointed over at Max. "You see that what we face is something far more sinister and powerful than we ever imagined. Can you see that? [. . .] As we speak, he is plotting his way into your neighborhood. He's moving in next door. He's infesting you with his family and he's about to take you over [. . .] He will soon own you, until it is he who stands not at the counter of your grocery shop, but sits in the back, smoking his pipe. Before you know it, you'll be working for him at minimum wage while he can hardly walk from the weight in his pockets. Will you simply stand by as your leaders did in the past, when they gave your land to everybody else, when they sold your country for the price of a few signatures? Will you stand out there, powerless? Or" –and now he stepped one rung higher—"will you climb into this ring with me? [. . .][28]

The juxtaposition of Max's hopeless struggle and his uncle's peaceful death illustrates the difficulty that the diaspora Jewish man had in composing his identity. He was faced with two options. The first option—represented by Max's uncle—was to succumb to the expectations of hegemony. This option resulted in both the serenity and the repression that accompany acceptance. The second option—represented by Max—was to rebel, to enter a struggle in which each step forward meant two steps back, a struggle in which every minute victory, every cathartic, well-aimed punch, caused the Hitlers of the world to climb one rung higher. "In the basement of 33 Himmel Street, Max Vandenurg could feel the fists of an entire nation. One by one they climbed into the ring and beat him down. They made him bleed. They let him suffer."[29]

As difficult as it was for Jewish men to construct identity while explicitly being othered, the process of being unbound from that otherness was equally complex. Once theological and bureaucratic barriers had been cleared, the remaining set of slowly eroding social obstructions meant that society's expectations of Jewish men were often unclear. Set in the 1950s, *School Ties* is a film is about David, a working-class Jewish teen from Scranton who must navigate this shifting landscape of expectations when

he is offered a scholarship to play football at a prestigious prep school in Massachusetts. Over the course of the movie, David must live up to a wide range of expectations and, in each of these situations, his success is predicated upon accepting some sort of defeat.

The film begins in Scranton on the day David is set to leave. In the opening scene, David is in a diner with some friends when a group of thugs come by to harass them. The conversation between the main thug and one of David's non-Jewish teammates turns quickly to David's heritage: the thug asks, "So it don't bother you they killed Jesus or nothin?" For David's friend this is no problem; it has no relevance to his life. For the thug, however it's still an issue. The juxtaposition of these two figures sets up a tension that runs throughout the film, between those who are ready and willing to embrace Jews and those who hold fast to their anti-Semitism. The argument then deteriorates into a fistfight between David and the thug. The thug lands the first punch, signifying his role as aggressor, but then David counters and quickly subdues him; this is a world in which a Jew can actually win a fight. However, as David drives his father home from work in the following scene, we see that David's victory might not be so complete. When they come to a stop at a railroad track, his father notices first the blood on his knuckles and then his black eye and admonishes him for fighting: "This is a school two presidents went to, a pipeline to Harvard University. They're gonna see you and think you're some kind of hoodlum." Only when David accepts the criticism does the train pass, allowing him to cross the tracks. The film's message is clear: David will be able to make the ascending journey across the metaphorical tracks into the upper echelon but will it require him to weather the hardship of submission.

That expectation of submissiveness is echoed in a conversation that David has with the headmaster of the school later in the movie. The conversation in question comes soon after David's arrival at the boarding school when one of his football games coincides with Rosh Hashanah, causing him to miss Temple. That night, the headmaster catches him out after curfew, praying in the chapel. When he confronts David, he makes an observation that marks David as the Jewish other: "You people are very determined, aren't you?" Alluding to the difficulty of existing as other, David replies, "Sometimes we have to be, sir." The headmaster counters by

quoting from Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," insinuating that the Jews' imposed humility is admirable. In response, David passive-aggressively speculates, "I wonder how meek they'll be when they do, sir."

The greatest indicator of David's predicament is the disparity between the expectations people have for him before and after he is exposed as a Jew. Before the other students find out that he's Jewish, David is the big man on campus; he is the star quarterback of the football team, in with the "in-crowd," dating the beautiful blonde. Even Charlie Dillon, the prototypical 'old money' character, is envious of David. He explains one night in a private conversation, "'Cause if you get what you want, you'll deserve it and if you don't, you'll manage. You don't have to live up to anybody else's expectations; you are who you are. That's really what draws people to you." Ironically, Charlie praises David for a sense of self that is rooted in the oscillating narratives of his Jewish heritage. Later in the film, when David is exposed as Jewish, he is suddenly burdened with otherness, barred from victory in any situation. His roommate explains, "Jews are different: it's not like the difference between Methodists and Lutherans; I mean Jews, everything about them's different." Even David's Western manliness can't subsume his otherness. When one of the other students hangs a swastika over David's bed, he responds by posting a written challenge: "Whoever made the sign, meet me at 10:30 behind Iselin Hall." The next shot shows David waiting alone in the rain for an opponent who doesn't emerge. Unlike David, the coward doesn't have to fight to earn his manhood; he is entitled to it by birth.

The film's climax is set in motion when David sees Charlie cheating on a history test. When the teacher finds the cheat-sheet on the floor of his classroom, he issues an ultimatum: "If the cheater does not come forward or is not identified," the whole class will fail. Mistakenly thinking he can resolve the situation without making himself a target, David confronts Charlie in private, threatening to denounce him if he does not confess. When the boys reconvene, Charlie accuses David of being the cheater and David reciprocates. Charlie and David then agree to let the other boys determine who is guilty—Charlie because of a shared history with the other boys in the class and David because "I've got no choice, do I? This is the way it's always been done." David submits, allowing things to proceed

the way they always have. The class deliberates and finds David guilty; once again, David capitulates: "Alright, I'll honor your traditions. I'll go to the headmaster and I'll lie." When David goes to confess, however, Charlie's roommate is already in the headmaster's office reporting that he, too, saw Charlie cheat; via docile perseverance, David prevails.

Both the grittiness and the finality of David's victory are confirmed in the film's denouement when David gets the last word, first with the headmaster and then with Charlie. First, when the headmaster comments, "I would like to forget this ever happened," David retorts, "No, Sir. You're never going to forget it happened because I'm going to stay here and every time you see me you're going to remember that it happened. You used me for football; I'll use you to get into Harvard." Then, when Charlie tries to salvage his dignity by taking the long view—"you know something," he says, "I'm still gonna get into Harvard and in ten years nobody's going to remember any of this. But you'll still be a goddamn Jew"—David grins and replies, "And you'll still be a prick."

Historically, Jews have been deprived of recognition as fully human in many ways. For Jewish men, this failure of recognition has often taken the form of demands to meet unclear, if not impossible, social expectations. What we see in both *The Book Thief* and *School Ties* is that Jewish men have redefined victory so that they can claim success even while yielding to expectations that they be defeated. By reformulating their understanding of victory thusly, they enable themselves to oscillate their narratives of defeat and therefore to maintain core elements of their identity.

Notes

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7. School Ties. Directed by Robert Mandel. Paramount Pictures, 1992.
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10. Zusak, 138-41.
11. Zusak, 139. Max is the antecedent of "him" in this passage.
12. Zusak, 140.
13. Zusak, 138.
14. Zusak, 157-60.
15. Zusak, 159.
16. Zusak, 160.
17. Zusak, 187-94.
18. Zusak, 187.
19. Zusak, 188-9.
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22. Ibid.
23. Zusak, 250-4.
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LEVI MASTRANGELO is a CAS Religion major at BU with a minor in Judaic Studies. When he's not engaged in his studies (and even when he is), Levi can usually be found at BU Hillel, where he is president of the Orthodox Minyan Group and an active member of the Religious Life Council. In addition to all those who read this essay and offered feedback, a special debt of gratitude is owed to Rabbi Ben Greenberg, whose Passover D'var Torah on oscillating narratives provided the thread that tied the various literary elements of this paper together.

From the Instructor

Jane McClenathan wrote the essay, "Serotonin Keeps You Sad and Sleepy" for her final paper for the WR 150 seminar "Science Writing for the Public" in the Spring 2013 semester. As a class, we explored what writing about science for the public means. We returned frequently to the definition we constructed as a class and the definition each student constructed for himself or herself. This paper was the final assignment for a six-week long research process. Students explored the literature on a topic of interest, chose a research question, made interpretations about the primary literature, and were asked to write a paper in the style of a Scientific American article.

McClenathan started her process with a rough idea of what she wanted to investigate. She did a great deal of research of the literature and reported her findings with ease; however, she made an important transition that many students were not able to achieve: she defined and interpreted the literature from her stance and attempted to make her own contribution to the field. In writing her paper, McClenathan explored the tension between simplification and "dumbing things down" for her audience. Eventually, she was able to strike a balance between presenting complex ideas that require a great deal of background for full understanding and offering the general public something palatable, interesting, and informative.

— Cynthia & Geoffrey Hill

WR 150: Science Writing for the Public

From the Writer

When faced with the challenge of creating an original *Scientific American* article, I responded with the essay "Serotonin Keeps You Sad and Sleepy." The prompt—which served as the cumulative assignment for my WR 150 course "Science Writing for the Public"—initially provoked me to write a research paper on stem cell cancer treatments, a topic on which I am fairly versed. But after a few hours of skimming through the abundance of peer-reviewed journal articles of that nature, I realized that the writing process for this assignment would only hold my interest with a narrower scope and a fresh topic. With that in mind and final exams looming, I started anew by researching the proposed causes of depression, eventually stumbling upon serotonin and its concurrent relationship with sleep disorders.

Like an actor getting into character, I found that using the format of a genuine *Scientific American* article motivated me to research well and write efficiently. Though not a typical assignment for a writing course, this exercise exposed me to the type of writing I'm more likely to complete in my career. Once I had finished the tedious process of filtering through the statistical analysis and scientific jargon of various journal articles, I went to the magazine's website and used its layout to draft my first attempt at the essay, copying fonts and photo placement from the very beginning. With the paper due date as a print deadline and some wiggle room for creativity, I was able to fight my usual procrastination with genuine excitement to complete my work. With various stylistic adjustments, the product came to look, sound, and smell like scientific writing for public consumption.

— Jane McClenathan

Jane McClenathan

Serotonin Keeps You Sad and Sleepy

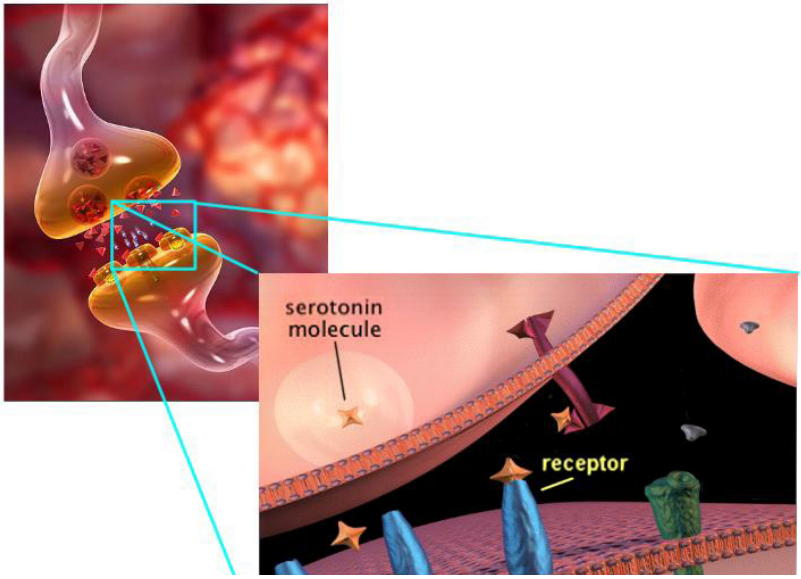
Neurotransmitter manipulation shows that an imbalance in serotonin may cause simultaneous depression and sleep disorder symptoms.

"I love sleep. My life has the tendency to fall apart when I'm awake, you know?" Ernest Hemingway had a not uncommon (though dreary) outlook on life.[1] As a patient diagnosed with clinical depression, he enjoyed the escape that sleep could bring. Unfortunately, unlike the famous author, many people with this condition find no more relief at night than they do during the day. In fact, a significant portion of depressed patients report sleep disorders as a secondary symptom, yet the existence of a biological link between the two problems remains uncertain.

However, hope exists for the suffering. One brain chemical commonly glorified in scientific literature, serotonin, plays a key role in both emotional stability and sleep patterns. While scientists debate the extent of serotonin's involvement in the development of depression, most agree that the neurotransmitter clearly plays *some* role in the psychological disorder, albeit one more complex than initially presumed. And depression isn't the only disorder linked to serotonin—recent studies have identified a relationship between serotonin and sleep disorders like insomnia and sleep apnea. So what does this neurotransmitter do? And why are these links important?

Serotonin, like every other neurotransmitter, is a molecule used to communicate in the brain. When released by a neuron, it travels to the next brain cell, which can either absorb it or block the molecule from entering. If allowed entry, serotonin will prompt its own release by the new cell, triggering a pathway throughout the brain that will eventually lead to the regulation of emotions and circadian rhythms. If blocked, the serotonin

pathway (and in turn any change effected by it) will not occur. With this basic understanding of serotonin in mind, let us move on to discuss the neurotransmitter's role in sleep and depression.



Figures 1 & 2. The meeting of two neurons, called a synapse, where serotonin is sent out of one neuron and absorbed by another through specific receptors.

What We Know

As previously discussed, the movement of serotonin across neurons creates a *pathway,* which in turn regulates a behavior. However, serotonin is not confined to one route and one set of neurons—various areas in the brain utilize the neurotransmitter to send different messages through the nervous system. In 2000, the *American Journal of Medical Genetics* published an article that related a specific gene to suicidal tendencies, demonstrating the result of *one* failed pathway. This gene codes for a serotonin receptor (5-HT2A), a molecule that rests on the edge of a neuron waiting to send serotonin into the cell. With a faulty receptor, the cell cannot accept serotonin, which blocks the normal pathway and prevents any regulation of behavior. The serotonin receptor discussed in this research does *not* allow passage of serotonin into the neuron as it should, and individuals whose bodies produce this receptor tend to have depression with suicidal ideations (Du, et al.). This research did not find a direct relation-

ship between a decrease in serotonin and a problematic symptom; after all, at least seven types of serotonin receptors exist, so the failure of one does not lead to a complete loss of serotonin circulation in the brain (Frazer 1999). However, the breakdown of a receptor *can* lead to the breakdown of a pathway, and the "significant association" between the serotonin receptor gene and suicidal tendencies suggests that the serotonin pathway allowed by this receptor affects emotional stability and happiness (Du, et al. 2000). Without the pathway, serotonin can still travel throughout the brain, but it does not act on the same regions that it would reach via the 5-HT2A receptor, and therefore the same behaviors will not necessarily occur. Though it may not have an impressive name, this one receptor (and the serotonin it receives) has quite an important role in securing our mental balance.

Like many neurotransmitters, serotonin has more than one message to convey to its targets in the brain. Twelve years after the completion of the previous study, researchers continued to examine the effects of altered serotonin on behavior, using technology and methods that were unavailable during Du's experiment. In the June 2012 publication of the *European Journal of Neuroscience*, a study involving the brain chemistry of mice found that serotonin depletion disrupted the circadian rhythm of sleep-wake cycles without actually decreasing the cumulative amount of sleep in mice. Rather than exhibiting insomnia symptoms, mice with abnormally low serotonin levels woke twice as frequently as control mice while sleeping for the same overall amount of time (Nakamaru-Ogiso, et al.). This finding, which opposes previous understandings of the relationship between serotonin and sleep, clarifies one of the key concerns about serotonin and sleep patterns. In previous scientific literature, some studies suggested that a decrease in serotonin led to insomnia, while others argued that serotonin depletion led to lethargy. This new result explains how both conclusions, though incorrect by themselves, can and do occur outside of the laboratory setting: by disrupting the circadian rhythm of sleep-wake cycles, an imbalance in serotonin leads to restless sleep during which the subject wakes often, leading them to lack sleep at night and desire sleep during the day.[2] While the mice studied in the aforementioned experiment share many biological and physiological characteristics with humans, including brain chemistry, they do *not* share their ability to nap throughout

the day with us. So while mice use daylight hours to make up for their wakeful nights, humans with similar serotonin problems have to fend off yawns with coffee and candy bars.

Connecting the Dots

We know that an imbalance in serotonin can upset circadian rhythms, and we know that improper circulation of serotonin can lead to suicidal thoughts . . . but beyond the scope of scientific inquiry, what significance do these discoveries have on medical advancements? To answer this question, let us revisit the dilemma introduced at the beginning of this article. According to articles from *Biological Psychology, Journal of Psychosomatic Research, SLEEP,* and *Psychosomatic Medicine*, sleep problems and depression seem to occur together more often than not. Sleep disturbances "belong to the core symptoms of the disorder," so it follows that one biological cause might exist for both symptoms (Riemann, 2011). While scientific literature floods with research presenting correlations between sleep and depression, sleep and serotonin, and depression and serotonin, one has to ask: could irregular serotonin regulation trigger both depression and sleep disorders?

First, let's take a step back and consider the "common sense" approaches to why depression and disturbed sleep exist together with such frequency. Some believe that those who lack restful sleep cannot perform to their greatest potential during the day, and therefore find themselves stressed and anxious, eventually leading to depression. Others see the flipside of that scenario, i.e. those with depression have problems falling and staying asleep due to stressful thoughts and nightmares. While both situations make sense at some level, they ignore the biological facts that we now know play a significant, if not primary role in the development of psychiatric disorders. In a twin study, scientists concluded that 58% of coexisting depression and sleep disorders developed due to gene expression, and while studies vary on exact values, the general trend demonstrates a relationship between genetics, depression, and sleep problems (Gregory, et al. 2011). If biology so clearly points to a genetic basis of these symptoms, certainly some biological product must cause them, which brings our discussion back to serotonin. Considering all three relationships—that between sleep and serotonin, that between depression and serotonin, and that between

sleep and depression—we can begin to draw inferences that will lead us to medically pertinent conclusions.

Why A Twin Study?

Twin studies are a useful tool in genetic research. Because of their close or identical genetic material, both fraternal and identical twins provide researchers with a way to determine whether the environment or genetic material has caused the exhibition of a trait. A shared trait implies genetic causes, while unshared traits usually signal environmental factors.

Why It Matters

We know that depleted serotonin can lead to a disruption of circadian rhythms. We know that a lack of serotonin absorption by neurons can lead to plans of suicide. Finally, we know that disrupted sleep occurs commonly in depressed patients, and that this association is usually genetically based. Nonetheless, we have yet to identify the root of the problem. Scientific literature does not state that depletion in serotonin *causes* the disruption of circadian cycles, nor does it state that the irregular serotonin receptor causes suicidal thoughts. However, with so many journals recognizing at least one of the correlations between the two symptoms and a serotonin imbalance, it is not unreasonable to presume that serotonin might be at the source of the coexisting conditions.

Scientists have generally accepted serotonin as a regulator in the sleep-wake cycle, but a fierce debate over its relationship with depression still exists. Some researchers, such as Alan Frazer at the University of Texas, don't think serotonin has much role at all in the development of depression. Others, including Joseph Coyle of Harvard Medical School, assert that a relationship between serotonin and depression—though complicated—clearly exists (Spiegel 2012). This debate, while important to the eventual understanding of how our bodies work, does not necessarily help the advancement of treatments for the two disorders. It also narrows

the critical lens to each individual relationship, but as we can see, a broader scope exists which demands consideration. When considering the three relationships previously mentioned, serotonin takes on a much greater role in the body than it has in individual pathways.

We cannot state that an imbalance in serotonin, whether by depletion or misdirection, causes every case of depression or restlessness. But for the cases that include both depression *and* sleep disruption arising from genetic expression, we *can* conclude that an imbalance in serotonin causes the disorders. With this understanding, scientists can work to develop medicines that reach the source of both symptoms, rather than treating them as separate disorders. Though Hemingway's only respite came in permanent sleep, future sufferers could have a healthy alternative to painful days and restless nights. By acknowledging imbalanced serotonin as a major contributor to coexisting depression and sleep disorders, scientists could provide new patients with the relief that Hemingway never experienced.

Terms

neuron

A type of cell found in the brain and nervous system.

neurotransmitter

A molecule transferred between neurons as a means of communication in the brain.

circadian rhythms

Physical, mental, and behavioral changes that occur in a cycle over a 24-hour period. These rhythms regulate the sleep-wake cycle, hormone release, and body temperature, among other functions.

receptor

A "gateway" molecule that allows some substances into the cell while preventing the entry of others.

NOTES

1. Ernest Hemingway eventually succumbed to his depression, committing suicide in 1961. He was not the first to do so in his family—his father, sister, and brother died in the same manner. The coexisting conditions imply that inheritance (and therefore genetics) factored into the development of these depression cases. (Source: *Running From Crazy*. Dir. Barbara Kopple. Perf. Mariel Hemingway. 2013.)

2. To clarify, an imbalance in serotonin does not make daytime sleep more restful than nighttime sleep. The disruption of circadian rhythms causes frequent awakenings during all periods of rest; however, the restlessness at night increases a patient's need for sleep during the day.

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From the Instructor

Sabrina Patrizio's essay, "Wouldn't You Like to be Loved by April Wheeler: Suburban and Feminine Containment in *Revolutionary Road*," was written as the final paper for EN 220: Postwar American Literature. As in WR 150, in EN 220 students read a variety of texts that revolve around a particular theme and write research-driven final essays. In order to complete this final assignment, Sabrina proposed her argument in a prospectus, explored relevant research by constructing and revising an annotated bibliography, and crafted and revised the final essay in response to peer and instructor comments.

Sabrina came to me early in the research process because she found that very little had been written about *Revolutionary Road*—a fact that she saw initially as an obstacle to writing about the novel. However, once she began to consider new approaches to the problem and different strategies for performing research, she was able to capitalize on the limited scholarship on Richard Yates and begin to fill in that gap. The final version you see here represents a series of revisions to Sabrina's line of argument with particular attention paid to positioning the claim within a body of scholarship and considering alternative perspectives and counterarguments. This essay is a joy to read because of Sabrina's sensitive literary analysis and beautifully wrought prose. Sabrina is an incredibly gifted writer, and her persistence in developing her approach to research has paid off in this exemplary essay.

— Gwen Kordonowy

EN 220: Postwar American Literature

From the Writer

"Wouldn't You Like to be Loved by April Wheeler: Suburban and Feminine Containment in *Revolutionary Road*" is the culminating essay from my semester in EN 220: Postwar American Literature. This final assignment gave me free reign to examine any prominent postwar themes in any of the pieces I read in the course.

From the moment I read Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road*, I knew I wanted to write about it. I was drawn in by Yates' writing style, his social commentary, and of course his flawed characters. *Revolutionary Road* quickly became one of my favorite novels, and I was eager to explore what literary criticism surrounded it. To my surprise, I found that almost none existed. For a long time, scholars paid this novel no critical attention. One of the most difficult experiences I had in writing this paper was locating relevant research.

After taking a step back and thinking about what really intrigued me in this novel, I realized that I wanted to understand better the entrapment April Wheeler, Yates' protagonist, experiences, and why breaking out of such a state proves almost impossible for her. I broadened my research to find discussions of these themes in the postwar era, and I found compelling theories in Alan Nadel's and Betty Friedan's work—the former discussing suburbia, the latter feminism.

Once I discovered sources with which I could engage, I genuinely enjoyed writing this essay. The lack of scholarship on Yates actually granted me a lot of freedom with which to express my own analysis of this novel. I also enjoyed being able to write about feminism in the 1950s through a critical lens. Most of all, however, I am ecstatic that Yates and *Revolutionary Road* are finally receiving some well-deserved critical attention.

— Sabrina Patrizio

Sabrina Patrizio

Wouldn't You Like to be Loved by April Wheeler: Suburban and Feminine Containment in *Revolutionary Road*

In his 1961 novel *Revolutionary Road*, Richard Yates explores just what it means to attempt to lead a revolutionary life in 1950s American suburbia. He describes the cultural landscape of conformity and the struggle for sameness that pervade this era: "a kind of blind, desperate clinging to safety and security at any price" (qtd. in Henry and Clark 208). His description conjures for the modern reader the familiar image of the perfect smiling suburban family standing behind their white picket fence, the father heading off to work in the city in his gray flannel suit, the mother waving in her apron and pearls while ushering the children off to school. In fact, Yates' description of the Wheeler house in *Revolutionary Road* mirrors this illusion—"small and wooden, riding high on its naked concrete foundation, its outsized central window staring like a big black mirror" (40). As Yates points out, however, "a great many Americans were deeply disturbed by all that—felt it to be an outright betrayal of our best and bravest revolutionary spirit—and that was the spirit I tried to embody in the character of April Wheeler," arguably the novel's protagonist (Henry and Clark 208).

Despite its relevance to the era, both culturally and literarily, Yates' work has received little scholarly attention, remaining almost entirely ignored until recent years. Scholars have, however, developed a range of theoretical work relevant to certain prominent themes in *Revolutionary Road*. Notably, Alan Nadel expands upon the term "containment"; originally coined as a term for American philosophy in anti-Communist Cold War rhetoric, Nadel's "containment" functions as a model for explaining the restrictive conformity of postwar American culture. While this gen-

eral idea of containment applies to most Americans living in suburbia in the 1950s, women in particular faced an even more oppressive culture, as explicated by Betty Friedan in her discussion of the Feminine Mystique. The double pressure that results from the combination of these two cultural phenomena created a repressive social and mental environment for the suburban American housewife, a theme Yates explores in his novel.

Although criticism of the postwar era so often excludes Yates' work, reading *Revolutionary Road* as merely a well-written novel overlooks its value as a work of literature and limits our understanding of his characters. Specifically, the previously unstudied April Wheeler requires application of Nadel and Friedan's theoretical work in order to decipher the enigma that is her character. All her counterintuitive actions are attempts to assert what little independence and control she can in the face of the containment she experiences both as a member of American suburbia and as a 1950s housewife. She is continually foiled in her attempts at independence and grows increasingly more frustrated; these frustrations build up to her eventual suicide. The crushing of her revolutionary spirit reflects the plight faced by millions of women of this era who struggled with balancing their true personalities with societal expectations. By tracing her attempts to reconcile her various roles throughout the novel, we can illuminate the elusive minds of not only April but the silenced class of women she represents, one fighting to defy social and gender rules. We can also understand her suicide as a desperate grasp at freedom in the context of a hypocritical American society obsessed with containing its members under the guise of freedom.

The cultural idea of "containment" effected a cultural constriction on Cold War America, enforcing adherence and conformity to traditional values. The term was first introduced as "the philosophical underpinnings of American foreign policy" following the war, mapping out a plan for Americans to combat Soviet influence (Nadel 99). As Nadel explains, "if America projects an image of potency through decisiveness, power, and spiritual vitality . . . containment will be effective by making the Soviets appear, by contrast, less potent and attractive" (99). Writers of the postwar period, Nadel argues, rebelled against that policy if they wrote "a narrative that neither generates events nor results from their sum" and therefore is

free to expand upon revolutionary ideas, thus rejecting American ideals of conformity.

Although containment affected most Americans of the era, Betty Friedan first discusses the sense of containment pertaining specifically to women of this era. "The problem that has no name," as Friedan puts it, is the "sense of dissatisfaction" women found with their unfulfilling lives (15). In particular, she addresses the plight of the suburban housewife suffocated by social expectations and trapped by her white picket fence. Although the problem was largely ignored or disregarded for a long time, "it is no longer possible to ignore that voice, to dismiss the desperation of so many American women" (26). The dual constrictions of social and gender containment pressed upon postwar American women and presented themselves as an opponent to the freedom of these women in society. This containment can only be circumvented by undertaking diverse roles in hopes of finding one that both rejects social convention and reflects the inner personality of the individual American woman.

When we first meet April Wheeler, she has already quite literally assumed a different role from that of her everyday life, as she enters stage right as the lead actress in the Laurel Players' production of *The Petrified Forest* (Yates 9). The audience is in awe of her apparent grandeur; "she caused the whispered word 'lovely' to roll out over the auditorium" and "seemed ideally cast in the role" (9). In this description, Yates immediately establishes April as a distinguished actress, one who "had attended one of the leading dramatic schools of New York less than ten years before" (9). It would seem to the reader that April has already transcended "the housewife's syndrome," as one doctor of the time referred to that inherent problem (Friedan 20). She has found a calling beyond the drudgery of cooking and cleaning and caring for children, and her suburban community has noticed her for it. Yet Yates soon dissipates this illusion; as the play begins to fall apart, so does April's façade. "She had begun to alternate between false theatrical gestures and a white-knuckled immobility" in a desperate attempt to retain this other role, uninhibited by the social conventions that strangle the actress (Yates 11). But Yates illustrates the inevitability of containment as April unwillingly slips back into her suburban reality. Her husband, Frank, reluctantly acknowledges this reality, her "change into the graceless, suffering creature whose existence he tried every day of his life to

deny . . . a gaunt, *constricted* woman whose red eyes flashed reproach" (17, my emphasis). Like the husbands Friedan mentions, "he [wouldn't] understand what she was talking about" if April expressed her feelings, but even he on some level senses her entrapment (19).

This suffocating containment propels April toward her next attempt to break out of her role as well as her surroundings, as she suggests that the Wheeler family relocate to Paris so she can work and Frank can find himself (Yates 147–149). She explains to Frank the "enormous, obscene delusion—this idea that people have to resign from real life and 'settle down' when they have families. It's the great sentimental lie of the suburbs" (152–153). April's sentiments echo what Catherine Jurca describes as "the path through which white middle-class identity founded itself on 'a disavowal of the things that would seem to make it middle-class'" (Edmunds 413). Jurca diagnoses "white suburban homeowners" of the era as hypochondriacally "plagued by the problem of 'homelessness,'" a condition from which the Wheelers certainly seem to suffer (412). But while Jurca argues that "the experience of white middle-class alienation has had more to do with self-pity than profound or even trite resistance to capitalist culture," Susan Edmunds counters her by suggesting that "suburban social codes can end up severely compromising the possibilities of human community and human intimacy" (413, 415). It is this compromise that is helping sever the relationship between April and her husband, causing her to have "contempt for [Frank], because [he] couldn't see the terrific fallacy" of their lives (Yates 151). Europe, April believes, is the only salvation from the constraints that are transforming them into the suburban stereotype they hate—"Look at us! We're just like the people you're talking about! We *are* the people you're talking about!" (150–151).

Yet amidst her explanations of her grand plan to move to Europe and escape dull suburbia, April "had to keep interrupting herself, with mounting impatience, to tell [Frank] not to laugh" (148). Frank cannot take her plan seriously, not due to the notion of uprooting the family and settling in a foreign country, but because she proposes a role reversal—"The point is you won't be getting any kind of a job, because I will" (147–148). His reaction to the idea of April working reflects the widespread cultural belief written "in all the columns, books and articles by experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers . . .

that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity" (Friedan 15). Such social upheaval appears ridiculous and frightening to Frank, who tries to identify so strongly with the middle-class man. But April, like so many other internally suffering women, cannot be satisfied with "what every other American girl wanted—to get married, have four children and live in a nice house in a nice suburb" (18). "'In order to agree with that,'" April asserts, "'I'd have to have a very strange and very low opinion of reality'" (Yates 149–150).

Such a lack of satisfaction in April's life extends to her relationship with her unwanted children. Earlier in the novel, the reader discovers that "according to their plan, which called for an eventual family of four, her first pregnancy came seven years too soon" (65). April planned to stage an abortion, but after a lengthy fight she submitted to Frank's insistence that they keep the accidental child, thus entering her life of containment (66–68). Because she subconsciously perceives them as one of the forces trapping her, April exhibits mainly feelings of resentment, impatience, and frustration towards her children. When her daughter Jennifer misunderstands her instructions regarding the disposal of certain toys before going to Europe, April snaps: "Didn't you understand me? I just finished explaining all that. Why can't you listen?" (143). As Jonathan Tran explains, "children ruin the Wheelers' every plan, ending a 'first-rate affair' between two first-rate people, forcing marriage and work, reducing their lives to the daily grind of caring for others, finally ending their hopes of escape" (202). This last foiling of their European plan comes in the realization that April is once again accidentally pregnant. Bad enough that "the disdain cosmopolitans feel toward provinciality cannot help but resent or idealize the dogged realness of children, their arbitrary 'thereness'"—now her children become a quite physical barrier to April's happiness (192).

Once again, April responds to encroaching threats upon her potential independence with a radical proposition, resurfacing her abortion plan. At the end of part two of the novel, Frank finds a box containing a rubber syringe and storms into the kitchen to confront April, who stands in "defiant readiness," daring him to stop her (286–287). From the reader's perspective, she appears prepared to finally defy the "mystique of feminine fulfillment [that] became the cherished and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture" and with which she so starkly contrasts

(Friedan 18). Theoretically, the American housewife "was respected as a full and equal partner to man in his world…free to choose automobiles, clothes, appliances, supermarkets; she had everything women ever dreamed of" (18). But if this image Friedan paints of social thought was actually true, why then does Frank immediately disregard April's opinion? Friedan's idea suggests equality, or at least an ability to logically discuss major decisions. Friedan tells us housewives "had no thought for the unfeminine problems of the world outside the home," leaving those decisions to their husbands, but the question of abortion could not be more involved in the home itself. And yet all of April's points in her argument for abortion, including those that would benefit her husband, are shot down by Frank's brilliant remedy for her problems: "We ought to have you see a psychoanalyst" (Yates 309). He clearly subscribes to the popular ideas of the time of sending emotionally disturbed women to "the analyst's couch, working out their 'adjustment to the feminine role,' their blocks to 'fulfillment as a wife and mother'" (Friedan 21). And by doing so, Frank maintains control over his wife and her actions, thereby further containing her.

April's stifling frustration in all aspects of her life results in her first successful defiance of both society and Frank: her brief affair with Shep Campbell. Towards the end of a double date, the Campbells find their car hedged in by others in the parking lot, and April devises the solution of sending Frank and Milly Campbell home in the Wheelers' car to relieve their respective babysitters while she and Shep wait for the other cars to move (344–345). She is therefore able to manipulate the situation, as well as Shep's emotions, to finally get what she wants. Even Friedan notes that a desperate housewife often thought, "what she really needed was to redecorate her house, or move to a better neighborhood, or have an affair" (20). April embraces this idea, as both relief and rebellion, when she tells Shep: "Here. Now. In the back seat" (357). But even this liberal dose of independence and rebellion cannot satisfy April, because, as the reader learns, her dissatisfaction with life runs far deeper than previously imagined. She refuses to listen to Shep's declarations of love for her, telling him, "It's just that I don't know who you are" (358). More than that, however, is her startling claim that "even if I did . . . I'm afraid it wouldn't help, because you see I don't know who I am, either" (358). In these few lines, April reveals the truest problem in her life—the question of her ill-defined

identity. Her insecurity directly reflects the "problem that has no name," that causes women like her to say "I feel empty somehow…incomplete" and "I feel as if I don't exist" (Friedan 20). The reader remains left with the pressing question: who *is* April Wheeler?

April's obscurity as a character is only augmented by the containment of her inner thoughts. Even her voice is contained until the very last moments of her life, as Yates writes from every point of view but hers until the one of the last chapters of the novel (410). By finally allowing her voice to emerge in the novel's narration, Yates gives April her opportunity to break through the restrictive containment that has trapped her for the duration of her entire life. Now, finally, the reader gains insight into the enigmatic April's mind. She is alone in the house, as Frank has just left and the children are with the Campbells. We see the seemingly impenetrable April break down—"her smile didn't fade: it simply spread and trembled and locked itself into a stiff grimace while the spasms worked at her aching throat, again and again, and the tears broke and ran down her cheeks as fast as she could wipe them away" (411). Here she reflects Friedan's "housewife [who] often is reduced to screams and tears" (23). She has been so utterly defeated by her containment that all she can do is cry.

In the midst of her tears, April is able to reflect on her past and acknowledge her mistakes. And "the only real mistake, the only wrong and dishonest thing, was ever to have seen [Frank] as anything more than that"—than a nice boy to go on one date with and then leave alone (416). In the same breath, however, she admits that she "couldn't possibly hate him. How could anyone hate him? He was—well, he was *Frank*" (415). Despite Frank's evident influence on the path her life has taken, April cannot entirely blame him for her suffering. She claims that her life was her own fault, that it is "a subtle, treacherous thing to let yourself go that way" (416). Therefore, she subscribes to the common thought at the time that "if a woman had a problem in the 1950s and 1960s, she knew that something must be wrong with her marriage, or with herself," and attributes the former problem to the latter (Friedan 19). However, April fails to realize that it is, in fact, the society in which she lives that contains her, both as a suburbanite and, more importantly, as a woman. These social conventions so stifle her independence that she sees only one way out of a life of miserable containment: suicide.

Yates implies in his novel the fundamental dilemma underlying that last statement. America has, from its very conception as an independent nation, touted ideals of freedom for all. Yet just a glance at our nation's history reveals its proclivity toward containing and even oppressing various minority groups within our society. At the time in which *Revolutionary Road* was written, women had retained the right to vote for several decades. It was even socially acceptable for women to wear pants instead of skirts. But this was, and still is, a far cry from freedom. Women of this era were expected to fall neatly inside the lines of a family-oriented, submissive housewife's role and to happily accept the supposed "freedoms" this status afforded them. From her peers to her children to her husband and other men, the postwar housewife received constant reminders of what she *should be*, stifling any expression of what she *was*.

This suffocating impact of feminine containment so strangles April Wheeler that she sees one drastic remaining escape route: to kill herself. By committing suicide, she finally breaks free of her own unhappiness with her society's rules. And it is through this action that she realizes herself and her situation in the meaning of her own last words—"that if you wanted to do something absolutely honest, something true, it always turned out to be a thing that had to be done alone" (Yates 426). With this revelation, Yates presents his readers with the essential question: what kind of "freedom" is this, in which an individual feels so entrapped that desperation pushes her over the edge? The answer seems simple: that is not freedom. And yet American society continues to contain its members with the restrictive noose of this "freedom."

Suicide is by no means a viable escape route from the pressures of living, social or otherwise. But in April's mind, she had no alternative, and that makes her life and her death a tragedy. By forcing April through the trials of various roles, Yates illustrates the struggles, both internal and external, with which suburban American women grappled during the postwar era. April repeatedly engages in rebellious behavior in a futile attempt to shed the constricting containment that traps her as both a suburbanite and as a woman. Through the development of this tragic character, Yates condemns the hypocrisy of an America that claims freedom for all while restricting opportunities for existence outside of societal stereotypes, an America that still exists today. The fate of April Wheeler reflects the irony

of postwar America, land of the free—or rather, land of individuals contained for the sake of maintaining societal status quo.

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From the Instructor

In their first paper, students in WR 150, "The World's Waters," tackle the debate about water as a commodity versus a human right. Is privatization of water the remedy to waste of this finite resource? What are the implications for industry if water is viewed as a human right? Questions such as these motivate claims that seek to enlarge knowledge or address the gap between conflicting viewpoints on water as a public good. Most academic papers across the disciplines engage conceptual problems to advance arguments about how we should think.

In the arena of public policy, however, writers are called to respond to questions about what we should do. "What don't we understand about competing demands on the Ogallala Aquifer?" leads to a fundamentally different claim than "What can we do about the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer?" Policy arguments, whether in the form of congressional testimony, memoranda that advise elected officials, or op-ed pieces that aim to sway public opinion on a particular issue, advocate a course of action, offering practical solutions to public problems.

Therefore, for their second assignment in "The World's Waters," students took on the alternative genre of public testimony to argue for or against hydraulic fracture, a natural gas technology that offers a less expensive energy source than oil or coal, but also poses serious risks to the water supply. The assignment required that students rethink their approach to argument. They had to decide which hat they were wearing: future taxpayer, voter, or environmental advocate? They had also to consider their audience: federal or state; legislative or executive? Writing as stakeholders in a real-life debate pushed students in a fundamentally new direction; they drew on evidence, first-hand experience, and exhortative language to persuade their audience. Addressing his comments to the Congressional committee with EPA oversight, Yash—speaking as an environmental advocate—makes the case that federal regulation of fracking operations is insufficient. Though the genre was unfamiliar to Yash, his meticulous research and diligent editing resulted in testimony of a quality on par with that delivered by experts in the field. The reader is left to decide if Yash has made a persuasive argument; clearly the editors of WR believe he did!

— Melanie Smith

WR 150: The World's Waters

From the Writer

Upon learning that one of our research topics would be hydraulic fracturing, I was intrigued since methods of addressing the present energy crisis are a subject of great interest to me. I was already familiar with some technical and environmental aspects of such methods. However, this assignment allowed me to consider fracking through the new perspective of public policy as I attempted in my testimony to reconcile its environmental and public health risks with its economic benefits. As my claim was a practical proposal rather than a conceptual clarification, not only did I research the status quo of regulations on fracking, but I also sought to propose a compromise whose terms would be reasonable and acceptable to all the parties involved. Finally, I spent some time simplifying the wording by revising clunky constructions and instances of passive voice that complicated my writing to arrive at my testimony's present state.

— Yash Soni

Yash Soni

Further Fracking Regulation: A Proposal for Greater Regulation of a Groundbreaking Technology

Testimony before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy and the Economy, U.S. House of Representatives

I thank the Chair and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to offer testimony today regarding hydraulic fracturing, one of the most controversial topics related to clean energy today. I consider it my duty as an American citizen to participate in our democracy by offering my opinion regarding this critical issue in the hope that it will help the federal government address this matter. In my testimony, after briefly reviewing the current technology of fracking, I will examine the disadvantages and advantages of fracking as it is conducted, and I will propose more stringent federal regulation to diminish its disadvantages while maintaining its benefits.

Hydraulic fracturing (fracking), a process used to access pockets of natural gas trapped in rock deep underground, entails drilling boreholes several thousand feet deep until the drill makes contact with shale containing natural gas. Immense amounts of fracking fluid (water containing sand and toxic chemicals to facilitate drilling) are propelled at great pressure down concrete-encased pipes placed in the boreholes in order to crack the shale and release the natural gas. Fairly recently, a new method of horizontal drilling, which involves drilling along a layer of rock, has become possible, allowing a single borehole to yield significantly more natural gas.[1]

This groundbreaking technology often endangers the lives of millions of people nationwide. Consider the case of Cathy Behr, a nurse from Durango, Colorado, who treated a worker who had spilled fracking fluid on his clothes. After spending just ten minutes near the fumes emanating from the worker's clothes, she was unable to smell anything. Within a week, multiple vital organs, such as her heart, liver, and lungs, began to fail. The fracking company's refusal to disclose its fluid's ingredients made it difficult for her doctors to treat her. Although Behr eventually recovered almost fully, the toxic fracking fluid caused her to remain in the intensive care unit for more than 24 hours.[2] Though fracking fluid may not always trigger such an acute reaction, the chemicals within it are clearly deleterious.

This incident highlights many of the issues with the current methods of the fracking industry. Companies often conceal the ingredients of the fracking fluid, which can prevent those who have been exposed to it, such as Cathy Behr, from receiving proper treatment. Worse still, the toxic pollutants in the fluid, as well as methane released from the shale, can enter aquifers and contaminate groundwater. Indeed, a Duke University study reported that in wells used for drinking water less than one kilometer from fracking operations, "methane levels . . . were seventeen times higher than in wells further away."[3] This is likely not a coincidence since "the chemical compositions of the methane contamination found in wells near the drilling site closely matched the type of gases extracted by the fracking process."[4] Yet, the government cannot hold companies responsible for such contamination because it cannot link the pollutants back to the companies' fracking fluid since the fluid's composition is unknown.[5] Furthermore, few federal regulations exist to control companies' activities. While state governments have the authority to regulate these companies, even when state governments introduce regulations, they are often unable to enforce them due to a shortage of inspectors compared to a vast number of wells. For example, in West Virginia, there are only 17 inspectors assigned the task of regulating the over 55,000 oil wells in the state. Consequently, inspectors must prioritize the wells that they visit, "which leaves some wells unchecked for years, and sometimes even decades."[6] To make matters worse, state governments are susceptible to economic pressures from natural gas companies. For instance, following

the Cathy Behr incident, the government of Colorado sought to require the natural gas company to disclose its fracking fluid ingredients. However, when the company threatened to leave the state (and prevent the state from gaining future tax revenue from the company), "Colorado reached a compromise where the industry would only report the ingredients of fluid that were stored in 50 gallon drums or larger."[7] Such susceptibility to pressure from companies endangers not only public health but also the environment. Horizontal drilling in each well requires between 2,000,000 and 4,000,000 gallons of water, which are mixed with between 15,000 and 60,000 gallons of toxic chemicals, rendering the water unfit for any other purpose after fracking.[8] According to one estimate, between 17,000 and 35,000 new natural gas wells will be created each year between 2012 and 2035, which exacerbates concerns about the process and its drawbacks.[9]

Despite the many environmental and health-related concerns associated with fracking, the process entails significant economic and environmental benefits. According to Terry Engelder who works in the Pennsylvania State University Department of Geosciences, "fracking accounts for 50% of locally produced natural gas . . . and the gas industry in America accounts for US$385 billion in direct economic activity and nearly 3 million jobs."[10] Moreover, because natural gas well productivity decreases very sharply, companies must constantly dig new wells to maintain their natural gas output. As a result, any legislation to discontinue fracking even temporarily would immediately harm the US economy.[11] Furthermore, fracking enables the US to access 42 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, enough to last the US 65 years at the 2011 rate of consumption. According to journalist Daniel McGlynn who wrote for the *CQ Researcher*, "The United States consumed 24 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in 2010, 90 percent of it produced domestically . . . [And] over the past 60 years . . . domestic production has more than tripled."[12] By providing a readily available domestic energy source, fracking decreases US dependence upon foreign oil, reducing US vulnerability to fluctuations in the prices of such sources. Moreover, burning natural gas in power plants instead of coal can halve the power plants' emissions of greenhouse gases. Because natural gas is much cleaner than other fossil fuels, it can serve as a temporary "bridge fuel" to meet energy needs "until renewable or nuclear energy carry more of the workload."[13] Clearly, a solution to avoid the

downsides of fracking cannot involve stopping it altogether and forgoing its many benefits.

In recent years, Congress has engaged in the debate by attempting to legislate on fracking. In 2005, Congress passed an act (which detractors often refer to as the Halliburton loophole) that "exempts fracking from many of the nation's major federal environmental-protection laws."[14] However, in 2009 and again in 2011, legislators sought to repeal the Halliburton loophole with the proposed Fracking Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act. Not only would the FRAC Act require fracking companies to reveal the various chemicals they include in their fracking water, but it would also allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate fracking. However, Congress has not yet passed the FRAC Act.[15]

While the FRAC Act is a viable proposal, I have a broader proposal that entails more specific action on the part of the EPA. I recommend that the EPA strictly regulate fracking companies in order to universalize safety measures and better ensure company compliance. Specifically, it should specify a minimum distance from new fracking sites to human residences and wells in order to prevent humans from being exposed to fracking fluid containing pollutants. In order to further decrease the likelihood of fracking fluid leaking into groundwater supplies, I recommend that the EPA introduce rigorous regulations governing the thickness and durability of the concrete casings. Finally, I propose that the EPA require natural gas companies to divulge the contents of fracking fluid. This is essential to properly treating any who come into contact with the deleterious liquid and to ensuring the companies are held accountable for any adverse effects to health or property.

Natural gas companies oppose such federal regulation because they fear competitors may discover their formula for fracking fluid if they reveal its contents and because they feel that federal regulation would duplicate existing state regulation and raise costs for them. Their stance is valid considering they are profit-based enterprises. Indeed, a 2009 Department of Energy study predicted that extra federal regulations would cost companies $100,505 for every new well.[16] However, greater federal regulation does not preclude the protection of industry interests. Federal regulation is required only because some states are unable to properly

enforce appropriate laws. The EPA need not impose further regulations on states that can prove to the EPA that they are already satisfactorily regulating fracking, which would substantially decrease the cost for many companies. Furthermore, the Department of Energy's study showed that "federal regulations would only increase costs for states that are not adequately protecting drinking water supplies and public health."[17] Since the regulations, which would not be redundant in those states, could prevent groundwater from becoming contaminated, they would be worth their cost. With regard to requiring chemical disclosure, companies would simply reveal which chemicals they use in their fracking fluid for the safety of the public and the treatment of those with fracking fluid-induced ailments. Companies would not need to publicize the exact proportions or uses of the substances, so competitors would not gain access to the companies' formulas.[18]

My proposed regulation would help address many concerns about fracking. According to journalist Chris Mooney, "faulty cementing is the leading suspect in possible sources of [groundwater] contamination" because the pressure of the released natural gas that drives the fracking fluid back up the well may also cause it to seep into aquifers through cracks in the well's cement casing.[19] By ensuring that the concrete casing of the well is strong enough to withstand the pressure that the fracking fluid and the rising methane gas may exert upon it, this regulation will help prevent the toxic liquid and methane from entering underground aquifers and consumers' bodies. The law concerning the proximity of fracking sites to human residences and wells will also help protect consumers from water contaminants since such pollutants from the fracking shafts are less likely to reach people farther away from the wells. Moreover, if the EPA regulated fracking, natural gas companies would be unable to apply economic pressure on lawmakers. If companies were required to disclose the ingredients of fracking fluid, doctors would be better able to treat any who have suffered adverse health effects because of the fluid.

The regulation I propose would enable natural gas companies to continue fracking, preserving the advantages of this profitable process. Consumers could continue to enjoy cheaper energy and companies could continue to make a profit with a diminished risk to the environment and to public health.

I hope lawmakers will consider my proposal and keep this testimony in mind as they determine how to address fracking. I trust that, after hearing this, lawmakers will act in the best interests of both the nation as a whole and the environment.

Notes

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