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LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSION





RESEARCH PAPERS SCARE ME TOO
by Rebecca Lake

When I reached the age of five, I walked around, pencil in hand, conquering the page with childish script and stories of turtles and friendship. For years, my hand swore to a dedicated path of writing creatively, looking toward imagination to form ideas on paper. The rigid educational structure of high school periodically ruined the creativity in my ink and paper relationship, causing the inspiration to drain from my assignments. Intrigue and the ability to drop projects with lack of interest was soon replaced with procrastination and frustration as words fell in checklist regulations and systemic formulas. In high school, the frequent novel based essays continued to strain my pursuit of writing, and the necessity of research papers in college added another level of struggle in the effort to write. This essay explores my own personal struggles with research papers, dealing with my own poor habits and motivations for those actions. Other students resort to bad practices due to the pressures of time restraints, deadlines and stress of grades. However, the focus for teaching essay writing should follow a comprehensive understanding to finding appropriate sources and acquiring a general understanding of grammar mechanics to promote confidence in student writing. None of my suggestions offer any concrete method

to eliminate these bad habits or to revive creativity in academic settings.

My high school course of English Literature introduced me to the idea of research writing with an assignment on the cultural and historical contexts for the Nazi and Confederate flags. The requirements for the assignment demanded database information, a relevant and recent article from the newspaper, and a minimum of 2000 words. Library staff adequately prepared my class for an academic standard search, relying primarily on database articles to fuel our background information. The librarian assistance added reassurance and a guarantee on how to easily find appropriate scholarly sources, but direction ended with only navigation and tips for keyword searches. Neither my teacher nor the librarian warned us against the possible bias in academic work or offered any citation guidelines beyond MLA format. As a high school student with a database of hundreds of possible sources at a computer stroke, I was overwhelmed with the one-week paper deadline. As time constantly dwindled with every tick of the clock “[my] ability to access information online [was] increasing exponentially, [but my] ability to use information effectively [was] decreasing dramatically” (Perelman 131). With no experience in vetting, reading, and comprehending scholarly sources, my poor freshman self-panicked at the enormity and difficulty of my upcoming deadline.

At a moment of panic, each student has many choices on how to execute their assignment: nestle into late nights to vigorously work on the paper, spit out a mediocre essay with an all-nighter, or plagiarize in some form by either buying or stealing work from another source. Unfamiliarity brings uncertainty and doubt, and as a student having to combine new concepts in writing to historical and cultural subjects, I chose to take shortcuts in composing my final research paper, not wanting to apply myself to a boring topic. The requirements for the assignment demanded at least five article sources, and with only a few days remaining before the due date, I relied on only two sources to draw information from; the other three sources listed in the works cited page sat as MLA placeholders. While I never

directly quoted those unused sources, my inclusion of their titles on the citation page serves as a type of misrepresentation. The findings from Howard, Rodrigue, and Serviss reflect how I personally implemented sources in my paper: much of their student paper pool (14 out of 18 papers) included information from a source that did not accurately express that what was found in the source (108). Upon my analysis of these unused sources, one was found to be inappropriate for my paper topic. On first appearance, “Origin of the Swastika” seems to fulfill the historical aspect for the Swastika symbol, but the actual information differed from that assumption. While this short article offers some brief overview material for the swastika, much of the information focused on small, obscure civilizations and their religious practices with the swastika image (Freed 73). If the pressures of time did not constrain my efforts to identify five adequate sources, this “Origin of the Swastika” would never have made the cut for my citation list as it does not follow the guidelines of the assignment.

For the one source with the honor of my attention, I skimmed the thirty-nine-paged article to find a limited historical knowledge and quotes that would help sustain the appearance of a source-backed research paper. This leap-frog approach to reading only accesses the surface of source use, not truly diving into meaning and understanding by “[citing] sentences rather than sources” (Howard et al. 186). The makeup of the overall essay relies on sophisticated and creative descriptions of the flag designs, high school history teaching, a summary of a newspaper article, and a quote that was already quoted in a source. At the end of grading, my essay scored a 95%, with the only critique being my choice of words for the concluding sentence. My teacher offered a better solution to the sentence, but other than that I was provided with no additional comments related to the quality of my sources, citations, or information. As proven with Perelman’s observation on student’s inaccurate SAT essay, a sense of comprehension sometimes leads to this undeserving success in writing (128-129). Even by making shortcuts to ensure my essay’s completion, I still got an A. My ego claims I deserve this A for the stress of spending

hours of writing and database searching, but the quality of my work ethic belittles that accomplishment. The A reflects my ability to throw together a somewhat cohesive paper without the extra hassle of explicitly following the rules for the assignment. Overall, between my detachment from the topic and the formal style of writing, I failed to apply my attention to completely understanding the points in each of the articles.

Responsibility falls to myself in my execution of my assignment, but I see flaws in the standard teaching approach for essay writing. With twenty to thirty kids in a class, the instructor has no control over the sources students eventually access and use for their final paper. Additionally, the task of reading essays and ensuring the originality of the work increases in difficulty with the amount of students in the class. I cut corners in the research process by correctly assuming my professor would not double check the authority and appropriateness of the sources. To hold students accountable for their writing and source use, the teacher should handpick the specific documents to be used within the research assignment. If the teacher knows the article content, they can detect when a student fumbles their way through an assignment (by only using a few sources) or when they plagiarize in their work. This method still maintains the dreadfulness of a stark, non-creative research paper; it only offers a higher standard for source analysis from the instructor as they are familiar with the information in the text.

I extended my own essay under more scrutiny, wondering if my shortcomings in the writing process manifested into unintentional plagiarism by patch writing or “[copying] from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes” (qtd. in Howard et al. 178). No plagiarism sites, out of dozens, identified any sort of patch writing or direct copying in my writing. However, I found through a website, Grammarly, that my paper had twenty-seven grammatical errors related to comma neglect, misplacement or the wrong preposition. (The website found an additional forty-nine “advanced issues” which needed a

payment to access.) As a native English speaker forced into twelve years of public education, I learned many rules for writing. The errors found in my essay highlight that my secondary education did not adequately prepare me for all facets of correct grammar execution. In writing, a student must know the English rules and understand the subtleties in the language and grammar. Only through proper instruction and knowledge can a student overcome one challenge of essay writing; it may not abolish plagiarism, but it might encourage more detailed work in structure and grammar.

My suggestions only offer an idealized version of education, not considering the individual motivations of the collective student body. School institutions place a firm emphasis on good grades which correlate into academic and later professional success, but fail to accurately measure student understanding on a topic. As a student, I detest having to put effort into work, especially for something that holds no interest for me (like a research paper on flags). Even with the haunting presence of failure, students continue to prolong their assignments, pushing them off to last minute due to the craziness of teenage life or the disinterest in writing something that provides no excitement to them.

Currently no solution exists for the plague of students lacking of motivation or the unreasonable grading expectations for educators. More grammar education provides the possibility for students to write with more poise, to have more confidence in the writing process: confidence, in this case, possibly breeding a more inspired passion for writing. But a grammatically sound paper does not mean a student understands the articles and information within their essay. Even with a solid list of sources, students may still ignore the importance of an article as whole, relying on horizontal reading methods to support their writing. In academics, the institutions can move towards improvement, not absolute perfection in the attempt to challenge procrastination and plagiarism. As college classes require, I will continue to struggle with my disinterest in research subjects, trying to understand sources

despite the pressures of time and grades. For me, my mind still clings to breathe of creative writing, desiring the ease and flow that words once brought to the page.

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GONNA: DRILL SERGEANT'S PROGRESSIVE HELPER
by Diana Lizotte

The word *gonna* is indelibly etched into my memory by a drill sergeant who used the word with the recruit standing next to me while we were training at a rifle range. While I can't remember the exact conditions for the one-way exchange, it was likely that a drill sergeant, possibly Drill Sergeant Case, observed a recruit, possibly Cadet Howard, point his loaded rifle at a fellow recruit and not at the target. In a low, throaty growl, Drill Sergeant Case told Cadet Howard, "Keep that rifle down-range, or I'm *gonna* rip off your head, Howard." I'm not sure if the growl or threat itself made more of an impression on me, but Drill Sergeant Case's delivery of the threat/promise to rip off Howard's head made me pay special attention to following all of Drill Sergeant Case's instructions. This vignette exemplifies how drill sergeants use *gonna* both as a promise and a threat to form disciplined teams in which the drill sergeants are the Supreme Beings.

In a similar manner, several of my friends use *gonna* with their children. For example, Sandra told me, "I use it with my children when I let them know 'I'm *gonna* whip that tail.'" Sandra uses *gonna* to encourage her kids to follow her instructions; it is both a promise and a threat of future action should they fail to comply. This use of the word

“*gonna*” easily demonstrates the descriptive grammar rules governing the word and the conventions of its use.

Gonna is the “eye dialect” spelling, or the contraction, of the phrase going to. *Gonna* is used to denote simple future tense when constructed with the modal verb Be + Going plus an infinitive verb. For example, “I’m *gonna* whip that tail,” is a phonetically shortened version of “I am going to whip that tail.” *Gonna* is never used followed by a noun, only by a verb, so one never finds a construction like, “I’m *gonna* the tail.” Instead, one would say, “I’m going to the tail end of the line.” However, one might say, “I’m *gonna* tail that car,” because in this case the word tail has been converted to a verb.

Most dictionaries consider *gonna* to be used only informally and in speech. For example, the Oxford English Dictionary states that the etymology of *gonna* is “[r]epresenting a regional and colloquial pronunciation of going to (see go v.), with reduction of the unstressed vowel and assimilatory loss of the initial consonant of the second element.” Miriam Webster states that *gonna* is “used for ‘going to’ in informal speech and in representations of such speech.”

From an analysis of a corpus of spoken English compared to a corpus of academic text (see table 1), it is accurate that *gonna* is used predominantly in speech.¹ In comparing a corpus of spoken English to a corpus of academic written text, *gonna* is used 3,414 times more in the spoken word corpus than the academic corpus (see table 2).

¹ A corpus is a body of texts on a particular topic, genre, or register or by a particular author. This corpus analysis was completed using Laurence Anthony’s AntConc software, which is a free automated corpus analysis tool.

Corpus/Text	Content	Size
Drill Sergeants.txt	Excerpts from 8 movies in which Drill Sergeants use <i>gonna</i> (Biloxi Blues, Forest Gump, Full Metal Jacket, Glory, Jarhead, Officer and a Gentleman, and Stripes)	5762
SBCSAE.txt	Spoken words from all over the United States	239000
SampleACAD.txt	Academic .txt files from Sample	1000000

Table 1. Corpus Data

This makes sense because *gonna* is a phonetic expedient. For example there are three syllables in going to, but only two in *gonna*. Also, phonetically, there are seven phonemes, including five consonants, in going to: /goʊɪŋ tu/, which makes it phonetically more difficult to say than *gonna*, with only two consonants: /ɡʌnə/ (or as some say, /ɡʌnə/).

Corpus	Frequency of the word	Frequency / corpus size
Drill Sergeants.txt	41	0.007115
SBCSAE.txt	816	0.003414
SampleACAD.txt	1	0.000001

Table 2. Keyness of the word Gonna

Gonna is a dream-word for drill sergeants: its present progressive form can create a promise and a threat and it is used mostly informally and in speech. To test this, I compared a corpus of the speeches of the drill sergeants from eight drill sergeant movies, compared them to the two other corpora and explored concordance lines to see how the drill sergeants used the word (see Tables 1 and 2). *Gonna* is used twice as much by drill sergeants than any of

the speakers in the Santa Barbara corpus and over 7000 times more often than in the written, academic sample.

In the movie *Stripes*, when Bill Murray and Harold Ramis's characters first arrive at Army Basic Training and meet their drill sergeant Hulka, Sergeant Hulka uses the word *gonna* eight times. Sergeant Hulka uses this contraction of 'going to' to make promises and to threaten the new recruits to form a team and to instill discipline. For example, he uses the 1st person plural voice for inclusion and to promise that certain actions are going to occur in the future, "We're *gonna* fall out with locker boxes and we're *gonna* have a locker- box inspection. And then we're *gonna* do five miles, rain or shine." Like Sergeant Hulka, drill sergeants in the other movies use *gonna* in a similar fashion. For example, Sergeant Major Mulcahy from *Glory* states, "We're *gonna* work on this day and night, Gentlemen!" The drill sergeants use *gonna*, usually in 1st person plural, to quickly form the recruits into military teams, by making promises about the physical labor they will do.

Sergeant Hulka also uses *gonna* to make threats, establishing his supremacy in the group hierarchy. For example, he states, "So you better hit them bunks, my little babies or Sergeant Hulka with the big toe is *gonna* see how far he can stick it up your ass." Drill sergeants in all the movies use *gonna* to threaten recruits. This is evident by the infinitive verbs that the drill sergeants use with *gonna*, for example, "rip," "stomp" and "hang." Gunnery Sergeant Hartman in *Full Metal Jacket* states, "I'm *gonna* rip off your balls [...]" and the titular character in *Major Payne* states, "[I]f he don't get across that rope, I'm *gonna* hang him with it!"

While drill sergeants' comments may be shocking, they make recruits take notice. The word *gonna* often plays a significant role in establishing the drill sergeant as Supreme Being. As trainers and guardians of neophytes, drill sergeants use *gonna* as both a promise and a threat, thus instilling discipline to quickly form teams and indoctrinate recruits into the physical demands of military life. *Gonna* is well-suited for drill sergeants who use this informal, spoken form of (be) going to quickly form a cohesive unit with

themselves at the top of the hierarchy and recruits following what they say...or else.

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MOHSIN HAMID'S *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST*:
POST 9/11 FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE EASTERNER
by Johnny Vaccaro

As residents of America, U.S. citizens rarely consider themselves in a state of precarity. They are secure in their homes, and only dramatic occurrences change this bubble of safety they have made for themselves. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* shares this dramatic occurrence and the aftermath through the eyes of Changez and 9/11. Though the novel does not focus directly on the impact of 9/11, the attack shapes the rest of the novel and rattles Changez's world and views. Changez's narration is unique to other 9/11 novels: this time an Easterner tells his story to a mute Western perspective. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* proves a point about the assumptions one makes in the face of trauma and how one often follows an us vs. them dichotomy without recognition.

Humans exist in a state of precarity. Regardless of one's standpoint in society, one exists in some form of precariousness and instability. This is a basic state of existence for humans and the only problem with this is that not all recognize their precarity on this planet in the same way. Currently, most of the world understands that 9/11 was "...a precarious moment for the nation, a moment in which this precariousness could have been recognized as a basic condition of life everywhere" (Darda 119). In our

world, this should have been the turning point where we broaden viewpoints and accept that others lead more precarious lives compared to America. In Changez's world, this point comes far before 9/11 (though the attacks certainly served to prove Darda's point about the precariousness of humanity), happening in Manila at his job. He locks eyes with a jeepney driver while conversing with his colleagues in the backseat. Changez senses a sort of hostility in the man's eyes, which he later chalks up to be "that he and I shared a sort of Third World sensibility" (Hamid, 67). Next, Changez immediately sees his colleague in a different light and recognizes the divide between them is deeper than he first thought. This experience begins to make Changez evaluate the position he is currently in and determine how deeply disconnected it is from his position at home. He realizes how consumed by the Anglophilic view he is, and starts to slowly distance himself from it. This is before 9/11 entirely, and Hamid intentionally draws us to this point to prove that things have started to change for Changez before the attacks. Readers may not focus deeply on this moment until their attention is brought to it because the dismissal of his realization is quick as he moves on to talk about emails from Erica. However, this is the moment that the reader notices a shift away from Westernized Changez that has been the focus thus far.

Everyone reacts differently to a traumatic event in their lifetime: some are more affected than others and some try to forget. An outsider's, Easterner's, perspective on 9/11 is rarely cashed-out. Since it was a tragedy that impacted America, the victims and families of victims are all considered American even if not the case. Mohsin Hamid touches lightly on the fall of the towers that it barely takes up a page, as Changez is not devastated nor his world rattled until he returns to New York. In his hotel room in Manila, Changez remarks upon seeing the towers fall: "I was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees" (Hamid, 71). This startles his American audience, and the reader is struck by his words and seemingly flippant dismissal of the victims and their families. Changez assures

the American man he speaks to that this is not the case, that “I am no sociopath, I am not indifferent to the suffering of others” (Hamid, 72). Hamid makes this an alarming passage for a reason: to pose the question, do we jump to conclusions about Changez after that statement, or do we understand him more because of it? His reassurance that his joy at the shock is separate from his mourning of the victims makes Western readers feel more offended than curious at his words. This is where we Westerners begin to fall victim to our interpretations of the character. The reader may begin to spiral into a cycle of mistrust and judgement on Changez’s character without realizing it. Hamid develops this novel so that the reader is unsure of every move both characters make, Changez and his American accomplice. There is no clarification of their positions through the entirety of the book; it remains entirely unclear if anyone is being threatened let alone which character. Our opinions hang in unbalance, and the reader walks a precarious line of victim and suspect. Changez begins his narration of the book by stating this clearly to the audience and to his American acquaintance, saying “since I am both a native of the city and a speaker of your language” (Hamid, 1). This is what Dunja Mohr says about Changez’s words, “The rhetoric of us vs. them no longer applies as Changez inhabits a position between” (94). This is a quick and clear way to show that he has a foot in both sides of the world without drawing attention to the obvious “us vs. them” dichotomy that presents itself further into the book, and this is how Hamid’s novel is unique.

Mira Nair’s adaptation of the novel into the 2012 film spins an entirely different story, though it maintains a similar distrust of character motives. Nair gives the previously anonymous American a name, occupation and motive to be speaking with Changez. Bobby Lincoln is set up as a CIA agent posing as an American journalist, their discussion turns into a pre-arranged meeting, and the novel’s allure of miscommunication disappears. However, while we do lose the anonymity that is key in the novel, we now see another viewpoint and additional dialogue. The

novel does remain open-ended, but Nair decides to give the film a definitive ending. Changez and Bobby's shared belief in humanity is what prompts Changez to give up the potential whereabouts of a kidnapped professor, while the CIA puts Bobby under more pressure. The unspoken mistrust in the novel is clear when Bobby mistakes Changez's text message to be something more nefarious and shoots one of Changez's rallying students before the CIA agents pull him away. Only upon inspecting the phone that Bobby has taken from Changez, does Bobby realize that he has completely betrayed Changez's trust: it really was a simple text message to his sister. The later scenes show Bobby listening back to the first line spoken by Changez: "Would you please listen to the whole story and not just bits and pieces, do I have your word?" (Nair). Bobby only then realizes the betrayal of his actions and becomes aware that he was caught in his own firm belief system and acted without patience or understanding. Though the film and the novel deliver the same message, the film conveys it more directly. The novel lets readers come to the conclusion that one needs to reevaluate their own reactions and interpretations, while the film shows it outright through Bobby's judgement. In the novel, the ending is so ambiguous that we are left to our own self-fabricated ideas in determining any conclusion we want to about Changez' involvement in fundamentalism; Hamid gives us sparse contextual clues as to what is happening beyond the story Changez is telling, leaving the author's desired meaning open to interpretation.

Throughout the book we see the American's reactions to Changez, using the narration given to try and glean any information we can about the other silent party in the conversation. Changez indicates that he is startled easily, "The lights have gone. But why do you leap to your feet? Do not be alarmed, sir..." (Hamid, 60). It is entirely up to the readers to draw their own conclusions: if the blackout was intentional, did the American jump up, ready to defend himself? Or was he simply nervous about a sudden, surprising darkness? This is one of the most notable passages where the reader starts to suspect both parties

could be there for different reasons. Changez makes offhanded comments throughout the next few chapters, remarking "...that there continues to be something about our waiter that puts you ill at ease" (Hamid, 108), and the casualness and polite air that Changez carries makes the reader unsure of what to make of both characters. Closer to the end Changez orders desserts and remarks effortlessly that "When you sit in that fashion, sir...a bulge manifests itself through the lightweight fabric of your suit, precisely at that point...where the undercover security agents of our country...tend to favor wearing an armpit holster..." (Hamid, 139). The American seemingly begins to readjust his position to conceal this, but Changez assures the man that he is certain that the bulge is that of a travel wallet, and didn't mean to imply otherwise. With Changez brushing it off and any former suspicions the reader is still lost as to which side is "good" and which side is "evil" in the dichotomy that is often referred to in times of a crisis. Hamid leaves the reader with some final thoughts on this dichotomy on the last page of the book when Changez is amiably walking our unknown American back to his hotel.. "I hope you will not resist my attempt to shake you by the hand. But why are you reaching into your jacket, sir? I detect a glint of metal. Given that you and I are now bound by a certain shared intimacy, I trust it is from the holder of your business cards." (Hamid, 184). Hamid's audience now feels forced to pick a side: is Changez plotting something, and is the American moving to defend himself? Or is it simply a chance meeting, with Changez telling his story to a slightly wary but entirely innocent American tourist? The questions the reader has to ask seem endless when the author does not give up any details about the characters. The conclusions are left to the audience to draw, and Hamid does this intentionally. However, what we do not realize is that we are not forced to pick a side. Changez walks a line between American and Pakistani, and though he feels strongly about the invasion and bombing of the Pakistani people he still begins his introduction to the readers with the phrase "I am a lover of America" (Hamid, 1).

Hamid continuously aims to “put the reader into a confused position of narrative judgement and resentful (re) identifications and re-evaluations” of each character (Mohr 93). Hamid is hinting that the reader’s interpretation (or misinterpretation) of our characters will depend on the reader’s own ideas and conceptions of who the suspect and the victim are in this scene by leaving the ending open. Hamid’s audience must ask: “what frames are conditioning our understanding of Changez and the American?” (Darda 112). The ambiguous ending forces the reader to consider that every story has multiple of sides, and that an interpretation of a story is based on a person’s conceptual framework that they have inserted into the text unconsciously. The fact that this information is never confirmed nor denied underscores the fact that we must draw a personal conclusion and fill in the blanks about the characters.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Hamid constructs the book in a way that leads us to question not only every character’s actions, but our own prejudices about race and status as well. The reader makes a choice to follow the black and white version of the story, or to realize that Changez falls right between both America and Pakistan. The identity of the anonymous American is meant to symbolize the reader of the book (presumably from a Western perspective) listening to an Eastern standpoint. The conclusions we draw about Changez and about the American express what we have been conditioned to judge about people. In other words, Hamid’s novel poses the question: how harmful is the “us vs. them” dichotomy and why do people think in such a basic way? The novel digs at the question: what have we been conditioned to think about Easterners after 9/11? *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* hands us these questions with the knowledge that it has not led us to any certain conclusions that readers must come to those on their own.

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INNOCENCE UNTIL ACCEPTANCE

by Rebecca Lake

Children generate a certain atmosphere as fragile individuals, requiring protection against the cruelty of and within this world. *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout explores the complexities of characters that harbor a certain impression of childish innocence while continuously affected by the severity of reality. As an adjective the word “innocent” refers to someone free from blame, yet still suffers the consequences. Innocent and innocence imply a sense of ignorance to the world, but within the very definition of the word “innocence”, people who suffer the wrath of consequence know the cruelty of this world. These two definitions offer a tension between appearance and internal mentality; the exterior expression of purity not accurately reflecting the tormented truth of the interior mind. By perpetuating an innocent facade, innocence prevents a human from facing themselves and progressing past the complications of the world.

Denise, a young pharmacy assistant, fulfills the description of innocence with a sense of youthfulness in her physical stature “like a thirteen-year-old” (8) and the genuine levity of her character. In experiencing harsh realities, Denise understands the evils of existence, but her demeanor and “the purity of her dreams” (11) act as a form of defiance to her awareness of real world horrors... As a

literal child, Denise witnesses the deterioration of her mother to MS (7) and the harsh fate of age, sickness, and death. In this incident Denise loses the traditional ignorance associated with youth. At twenty-two Denise's husband dies, accidentally shot at the hands of his best friend (19) and years later she runs over her cat, an emotional support after the death of her husband (24). In the detonation of the label innocence, Denise fails to meet the requirement of pure, unspoiled by the world, but equally she fills the descriptor of not carrying blame, yet suffering. Ever since the destruction of her childhood, Denise clings to an atmosphere as young and dainty, frail as a child. This repression continues until a transitional moment as Denise enters the realm of motherhood. Denise preserves youth in the absence of a quality childhood; but "no girl stay(s) a girl...the gravity of life weighing her [Denise] down" (27). By physically changing through childbearing, Denise fully receives the burden of reality, no longer repressing factors that defiled her real time as an innocent.

Diverging from an attachment to innocent traits, the character Kevin represents the recognition of falling from innocence, obsessing over that loss to the point of corruption. At a young age Kevin's mother commits suicide, exposing Kevin to her dead and bloody body on the kitchen floor (33); Kevin's purity leaves at this sight. Constantly tapping into the trauma, Kevin seeks a career in psychology, attempting to resolve other's issues and not his own; he entertains a damaged relationship that ends in despair (42) and later returns to the hometown with a plan to end his own life. The narration of Kevin's observations reveals his opinion toward innocence and the ignorance surrounding it as he watches the wild rogues, how they contain "sad ignorance...in their benign white petals" (31); this blindness to reality coordinates with sorrow as shown with Denise's steadfast innocent appearance while her mind endures personal tragedies. Kevin's dedication to his mother's suicide, the pinnacle of innocence, prevents Kevin from moving toward an adult acceptance. Kevin's current frame of mind traps him in a childlike obsession, wondering why, wanting answers. Saving Patty Howe from the violent

shoreline waves (47) injects a mental change for Kevin. The passion for life overthrows the mystery of death, Kevin pushes away his inexperience toward the values of living.

Sitting at the cusp of youth and innocence, eleven year old Winnie Harwood portrays the natural progression into an adult relationship with the world. The Harwood family operates with a system of dysfunction and isolation. Winnie's mother, Anita, inherits the disapproval of the town (182) and functions through the use of pharmaceutical sedatives (184). Anita controls her eldest daughter, Julie by keeping her contained within the house as a way to prevent Julie from engaging in a non-marital living situation. Winnie observes the complications of her family, especially her mother, but stays unaware, not comprehending the underlying problems for the family. When Julie reveals Anita's desire to prevent Julia from engaging in unmarried sexual relations (as Anita had), Winnie claims to understand, "but she didn't know, exactly" (190). In Winnie there rests this spark of purity, of childhood ignorance; the complex nature of the Harwood family ruins Winnie's innocence as Julie asks Winnie to betray their mother, by covering for Julie as she flees to Boston with her boyfriend (197). The lie challenges Winnie to evade the suffocation of her household, signifying that "something had changed for the good" (198). Within this change, Winnie acquire more understanding in her environment, considering the feelings of her neglected father by imagining the unique problems to him as a person. Winnie's decision to eat pancakes despite her own preference (199) marks a transition from innocence to awareness over when to comply with request(s) and when to defy the unreasonable institutions of her mother.

Three characters combat a perception of innocence and battle the forces that ruin and taint the purity of children. For each character there rests an underlying problem of abandonment and separation from a mother figure; these characters lose an essential protective barrier against the world. Denise and Kevin share mothers that, due to a sickness, create an environment for an unsuccessful childhood. A genetic disease terrorizes young

Denise, forcing Denise to act as a caregiver. Later in life this struggle transforms into an unhealthy ignorance toward hardships as she compartmentalizes the burden of the world within her attitudes. Kevin's mother carried a decision to live or die and, by deliberately choosing to die, Kevin experiences this damaging consumption in death. By accepting the gravity of misfortune and the inspiration of life, Denise and Kevin respectively break from the constricting influence of grief and pain. Winnie, as a child, demonstrates how acknowledgement leads to progression and acceptance. Innocence towards reality works logistically for a normal eleven year old, but the level of malfunction within the Harwood family prompts more defiance towards the traditional childhood norm. Winnie's ignorance, as with Denise's and Kevin's, prevents her from escaping her mother's impractical control. Only through a deliberate rejection of her mother's influence does Winnie exert personal dominion over her own life and future. From there, she now knows how to deceive and escape the oppressive Harwood house.

Through these characters, they lay out a four-step process to overcome the naivety of clinging to innocence when personal experience demand growth. Innocence allows for a protection against the cruelty of the world, but once misery corrupts and destroys, ignorance only restrains and conflicts. Ignorance stands for naive, blind to reality; a person cannot overcome difficulty without proper knowledge and understanding of their condition. Acceptance allows for a handle against the world to create protective barriers based on conscious knowledge rather than ignoring the problem; recognition fosters skills to deal with misfortune in productive ways and cope with all mental facilities.

THE IMMORTALITY OF MYTH





A REVISED HAPPY ENDING

by Callahan Pels

The past month I have been thinking about a lot of things, particularly about a short story called “Happy Endings” by Margaret Atwood. Sitting atop of my dorm room bed while listening to the push and pull of the high-tech elevator in the hallway next to me, I couldn’t help but feel that Margaret Atwood was right; that happy endings don’t exist. It was the week of Halloween, and everything I believed to be so solid had inexplicably collapsed around me. At that moment, sitting alone bathed only in the occasional light of a passing car’s high-beams, I found myself falling apart.

Margaret Atwood begins her story stating that “John and Mary meet. What happens next? If you want a happy ending, try A” (Atwood 282). Atwood states that happy endings don’t exist, that any story that says so is deceitful (Atwood 285). To Atwood, all stories end in death. The endings are always the same, no matter what happens in the middle. Relationships don’t always work out, many crash and burn in between. The night of Halloween, I began to believe that this is true, that happiness is an illusion. I felt that all I had been through was a cruel playback of Margaret Atwood’s tale...

Callie and Thomas meet.
What happens next?
If you want a happy ending, try A.

- A. The first day of her freshman year of high school, Callie finds herself sitting next to Thomas in homeroom. Callie discovers herself sitting next to him again in English, History, and Biology. They become good friends. Sophomore year of high school, Thomas and Callie begin dating. They go to prom together senior year, and are voted cutest couple for their senior superlative. After college they get married, pursue their dream careers, and “have two children, to whom they are devoted. They go on fun vacations together. They retire. They both have hobbies which they find stimulating and challenging. Eventually they die. This is the end of their story” (Atwood 282).
- B. Callie and Thomas fall in love and date until the middle of their senior year of high school. Thomas drives Callie home from school, and parks the car in front of her house. He is shivering, and not because of the mounds of greying snow that line the sides of the choppy asphalt road. He tells Callie that he wants to break up—but that he is really sorry for hurting her feelings. Callie cries about it to her dad, who does his best to respond to the bubbling stream of words flowing from his daughter’s mouth. The next week Thomas tells Callie he made a mistake; she takes him back and they move on from the incident. They get voted cutest couple in the high school, and date until their sophomore year of college. Thomas breaks up with Callie again on Halloween night. He says he wants to be independent for a while and become more mature. She should have seen it coming, but was blinded by the hopes of being high school sweethearts. Two weeks later; Thomas wants to get back together and Callie agrees.

C. Callie and Thomas have broken up many times in their lives, each time she takes him back. Her friends tell her not to, that he isn't good enough for her—that he will leave her again. She ignores them. They get married and adopt a dog and two cats. Callie works a job that she finds trivial and unfulfilling while Thomas grows distant with each passing day. He comes home later each night, until he doesn't come home at all. She meets up with him in a café, noting that he won't make eye contact. He asks for a divorce. Callie protests, forcing him to stay in the relationship. Thomas stays, but is no longer faithful. Their dog dies; the cats run away. Callie continues to work her desk job, fantasizing about the time she aspired to be a doctor. She grows depressed and weak, and finally can't take it anymore. She decides to leave Thomas. Once she does, she realizes she has nothing to go to. She has no friends, as the only person she was close to was Thomas. She has no passion for her career, and discovers she has no love for anything anymore. In keeping Thomas, she has lost herself.

I found myself spiraling into these thoughts of a depressing future, carving Atwood's tales into stories of my own. However, it was at this point I remembered a term my dad once used... a term that I couldn't help but feel applied to me. Teen angst: a phrase he defined as "teenagers who are dealing with stressful events and theorize the outcome to be nothing but a complete catastrophe." I realized that the only way Atwood's stories could come true is if I let them. Right at this point, I decided that my story and Atwood's would not end up the same.

Thomas and Callie break up.

What will happen next?

If you want a happy ending, try D.

D. Callie and Thomas date for three and a half years. They are best friends, and spend as many days as they can outdoors, trying to figure out which hiking trail has the best view and what pond is the best place to fish. They

become intertwined into each other's lives, to the point where their stories are practically identical. One day, in rather odd timing, Thomas decides to break up with Callie on Halloween night. Callie is devastated, and is incredibly overwhelmed for the next three weeks. Thomas reaches out to Callie, saying he made a mistake. The two of them talk, and Callie realizes that while she once thought her happy ending would be with Thomas, there are other possibilities that are unfolding. She realizes that they are young, and have learned valuable lessons from their time together. She knows that she will remain thankful that they were a part of each other's lives. Callie and Thomas's lives are no longer braided together, but as they trail away from each other they will know that their strings will always remain knotted together at that one special intersection. Their connection is not frayed, but instead independently parallel. Callie pursues her dream of working in the medical field, and realizes that she wouldn't have truly been able to do so if she had stayed with Thomas. She finds herself surrounded by friends that she never would have made if it were not for Thomas breaking up with her. They both find respectable partners, and occasionally will send each other Christmas cards depicting the smiling faces their families. Eventually, as Margaret Atwood pointedly states, they will both die. But death is not a marker of an unhappy ending to them. A happy ending is marked by the many valuable lessons and experiences acquired through life. Callie decides that encountering each moment in its fullest, from standing at the base of a mountain and feeling as small as an ant to thanking the person who held the door for you, is the true marker of a happy ending.

Atwood ends her story by saying that the only authentic ending is that "*John and Mary die. John and Mary die. John and Mary die*" (Atwood 285). To that I say yes, everyone will pass on, and everyone will face struggles, but that doesn't equate to an unhappy ending. It is up to us to pull ourselves out of the mud we have fallen into and learn to rise above

our situations. Our happy endings will be defined by the legacy and lessons that we leave to others. So, on that note, I will end by saying *Thomas and Callie survive*.

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GOD'S PRESENCE & INFLUENCE IN NEIL GAIMAN'S
THE SANDMAN
by Julia Torrico

Neil Gaiman's comic book volumes, *The Sandman: Nocturnes and Preludes* and *Season of Mists*, present the story of Dream/Morpheus emerging from his 70 year imprisonment, and his encounters with other mythical beings while looking for his lost magical objects. Traditionally, it is believed that God only appears in a time of need, and it is further believed that God's presence is only felt by people who believe in him. However, Gaiman presents God as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, and these characteristics are also presented throughout the Old Testament of The Bible. Furthermore, Gaiman presents God's interaction and influence between different people, regardless of if they are mythical or human. For the purpose of understanding God's presence, I will compare God's presence in *The Sandman* to his presence in The Bible.

In *The Sandman*, God is referred as "The Presence," and his existence can be sensed by anyone and everyone. Also, whether God is or is not present himself, his power and domain surround others. The scene of Moses and the burning bush is similar to the portrayal of Hell present in Sandman: Preludes and Nocturnes. When Etrigan speaks to Dream about the changes in Hell, he says "Things change...in Earth and Hell" ("A Hope in Hell," Gaiman).

Even though God's presence is not mentioned in this scene, one can assume that God is present by the conversations that Lucifer has with the other fallen angels. For example, when Dream encounters Lucifer, he is told of the further changes that have occurred in Hell. Beelzebub says to Dream "Lucifer [is] indeed no longer sole [monarch of] the [nether regions]..." ("A Hope in Hell," Gaiman). Lucifer further adds "the Civil war in Hell that ensued tipped the precarious balance of power. We rule in coalition, Azazel, Beelzebub and I" ("A Hope in Hell," Gaiman). From the surface, it seems the decision of Azazel to challenge Heaven caused a great change in Hell, and power over Hell has formed a co-monarchy. However, in *Season of Mists*, God shows his presence in the formation and changes occurring in Hell. When Dream returns to Hell, Lucifer proclaims to Dream of his resignation as ruler of Hell. Lucifer says "You know I still wonder how much of it was planned. How much of it He knew in advance. I thought I was rebelling. I thought I was defying his rule. No...I was merely fulfilling another tiny segment of his great and powerful plan." ("Episode 2," Gaiman). Lucifer acknowledges that God's presence existed in his decisions to rebel. "The Presence" not only involves God's spiritual or physical existence on Earth, but his existence in Hell and through a person's decisions. For example, Hell is now in an organized structure and it is ruled by three beings rather than one. Next, I will discuss the various adjectives that describe God, and how these adjectives relate to the various actions he takes in *Sandman*.

Another example of God's omnipresence is when Gaiman demonstrates how God understands each character's action towards him. When Remiel disagrees with God's decision over Hell, God does not react towards Remiel's upsetting manner. He gives Remiel time to channel his emotions and to recompose himself because God's angels cannot entirely understand God and his plans for the world. God is understanding and sympathetic towards Lucifer by not stopping him after he resigns as ruler of Hell. God is aware of Lucifer's thoughts and emotions as an individual. Lastly, God understands Dream when he is

indecisive over ownership of Hell, and when he willingly gives the key to Hell to Duma. This demonstrates God as an understanding, logical, and all-mighty being; his prescience.

Some of God's characteristics in Sandman are vengeful, all-knowing, fair and just, merciful, and omnipotent. In Seasons of Mist, Dream and Lucifer are told by Breschau of his punishment declared upon him from God, and he drones on about his evil deeds during his time in the land of the living. Breschau says "It's not me that is torturing me. It's vengeance of the Lord—Did you not hear me?" ("Episode 2," Gaiman). Breschau claims that God is a vengeful being, and he inflicts punishment on those he seeks to exact his vengeance upon for committing evil deeds. However, this certain characteristic of God seems to be unfamiliar with the other characteristics of God presented in Sandman. The word vengeance is similar to physical punishment inflicted upon another person, and it seems to be a characteristic that disregards order and balance. However, from Breschau's remark of God, one can say that God can be described as a being that is balanced and judging. Even though Breschau has committed many sins, God does not enact vengeance upon Breschau for his evil deeds. He judges the fate of Breschau's in the afterlife based on his actions performed on Earth, so Breschau's sinful acts were equal to his placement in Hell and his tormenting punishment. God does not torture Breschau, nor does he take vengeance upon him. For his evil deeds, Breschau condemns himself to Hell and to the torturous punishment he must endure while imprisoned.

A Biblical example that demonstrates God's judging characteristic is presented in Cain and Abel. When Cain kills Abel, God is angry with him. "What have you done?' Yahweh asked. 'Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. Now be cursed and banned from the ground that has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood at your hands...whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance.' So Yahweh put a mark on Cain, so that no one coming across him would kill him" (Genesis 4:10-11 & 15). Even though God places a

curse on Cain for murdering Abel, God does not inflict vengeance against Cain for his sinful act. God carries out the act of judgment, using justice and fairness. It may not seem like Cain is receiving a punishment that is fair since God allows him to live. However, God's decision to curse Cain is a just and fair punishment because Cain has to live with the guilt of murdering his own brother, and he will eventually need to reflect on his sin. Like Breschau, Cain has restricted himself from his homeland and God.

When Lucifer tells Dream his thoughts as ruler of Hell, Lucifer says "You know...I still wonder how much of it was planned. How much of it He knew in advance" ("Episode 2," Gaiman). From Lucifer's remark about God, the reader can infer that God is a being who is all-knowing. To add, Lucifer claims that his rebellion seemed to be an event that was expected, and Lucifer's rebellion upholds the plans of God. Furthermore, with Lucifer quitting as the ruler of Hell, there are no objections from the angels of God and God himself on this decision. This signifies God is all-knowing of Lucifer's decision. God also is merciful and omnipotent in this scene. Returning back to the example of Cain and Abel, God is merciful towards Cain. Even though Cain murders Abel, God is merciful towards him by allowing Cain to live. His mercy is justified by Cain being the first-born child of Adam and Eve. Also, with placing the mark on Cain, Cain is still guarded and watched over by God. If anyone kills Cain, then the murderer is to suffer punishment from God.

God is omnipotent, and this characteristic is further presented in *Season of Mists*. When the angel relays God's message to Dream about Hell, he says "Hell cannot be entrusted to other than those who serve the name directly. It is too important. That myself, and Duma, are to take over Hell." ("Episode 6", Gaiman). God does not request from Dream the key or ownership of Hell, he simply claims ownership of Hell. Before Jesus' resurrection, God constructs the division between Heaven and Hell. This indicates that God is the sole creator and guardian of Hell, which is why Hell is considered important. Also, Jesus traveled to Hell "in the spirit, [and] he went to preach to the

spirits in prison” (1 Peter 3:19). Since Jesus is a part of God, then God has the power to free these spirits from Hell and ascend them into Heaven. This demonstrates that God is omnipotent in creating these places that humankind might not entirely comprehend, and God can free people from torment or misery on Earth and in Hell.

Through these examples of God’s characteristics, God does seem familiar, and he is presented as God who is a judge, just, fair, merciful, omnipotent, and all-knowing. Next we will discuss the depiction of Hell, and how individuals conceive and interact with Hell, and how God plays a role in interacting with Hell.

In *Preludes and Nocturnes*, Hell is described and depicted as place that is organized, painful, tormenting, and endless. Beelzebub tells Dream that he, Lucifer, and Azazel are the co-rulers of Hell, so power over Hell is not entrusted to one person, but to three figures. The reason for three co-rulers goes back to the fact that Azazel challenged Heaven, so Hell can be considered a place that must maintain a balance of power. Furthermore, in Hell, issues are solved in an orderly fashion. For example, when Dream explains to Lucifer of his stolen helmet, Lucifer summons all the demons of Hell. Dream spots the demon, Choronzon, and Lucifer questions him about the helmet. Choronzon replies “I have broken none of the laws of Hell. If you want your precious back then you must fight me for it” (“A Hope in Hell,” Gaiman). Most readers would assume that Choronzon and Dream will have a physical fight. However, they have a “formal challenge” involving a game (“A Hope in Hell,” Gaiman). This signifies a process and organizational conduct that is implemented in Hell. Also, no one interfered with decisions or the game between Dream and Choronzon, nor did anyone interfere with Lucifer’s decision to punish Choronzon for losing.

Not only is Hell described as an organized place, but it is a place that is physically growing and changing. When Dream and Etrigan pass the wood of suicides, Etrigan says to Dream “But as things change, Lord, they transmute as well...” (“A Hope in Hell,” Gaiman). Etrigan is proposing that with change also comes a form of

transformation. Not only is the wood of suicides changing, other parts of Hell are expanding and altering. For example, Lucifer's palace has physically changed since Dream has last visited Hell. These examples of change indicate that Hell is a place that is physically endless. The depiction of Hell as an endless, painful, tormenting, and altering place is explained more in *Season of Mists*.

Hell is described as a place that is "an inferno of pain and flame and ice, where every nightmare had come true long since" ("Episode 1," Gaiman). Residing in Hell are damned souls and inhabitants that are "neither [living, nor dead]" ("Episode 1," Gaiman). This description relates to the concept of Hell in the afterlife. In Hell, a soul experiences pain and terror from the demons that live in there. In "Episode 4," Charles explains to Paine his concept of Hell. He says "I think Hell's something you carry around with you. Not somewhere you go" (Gaiman). Charles considers Hell to be a mental creation of humankind, and each person must endure their own version of Hell through an endless cycle of torment. However, Paine says to Charles "I think maybe Hell is a place. But you don't have to stay anywhere forever." ("Episode 4," Gaiman). Paine considers Hell to be an actual place, but you are not confined to that place as punishment. Identifying Paine and Charles concept of Hell on Earth, Hell is a mental creation formed by an individual and humankind. From this creation of Hell, people are placed in a cycle of torment, but a person does not have to reside in earthly Hell forever. A person must continue to reflect on the misdeed, mistake, or sin they committed, like Cain constructing his own Hell for murdering his brother Abel.

God describes Hell as "Heaven's reflection. It is Heaven's shadow. They define each other. Reward and Punishment; hope and despair." ("Episode 6," Gaiman). Hell is a balance of power, like yin and yang. Hell has a necessary function as a place and concept, and it must maintain the balance of power and order both on earth and in the afterlife.

God's role in Hell is ruler and creator. Lucifer says "I was merely fulfilling another tiny segment of his great and

powerful plan.” (“Episode 4,” Gaiman). Even though, Hell is a tormenting inferno, it is a place that God creates to maintain a balance of power in the afterlife and on Earth. Everything that seems good or bad, is all part of God’s plan as the one, true creator. Remiel relays God’s message to Dream. God states “That myself, Duma, and I are to take over Hell.” (“Episode 6,” Gaiman). Since God is the creator of Hell, God has the role of ruler as well, which is why God claims ownership of Hell from Dream.

Both Remiel and Duma follow the orders of God by being God’s eyes at the banquet in Dream’s kingdom. However, when Remiel relays God’s message to Dream, he questions God’s decision over Hell. Duma remains silent during the entire conversation, which the reader can assume that Duma is still compliant with God’s decision. Remiel says “...this is neither fair nor just. We have done nothing to be cast out. We have never rebelled...” (“Episode 6,” Gaiman). Remiel demonstrates an upsetting behavior towards God. Remiel thinks that God’s decision seems contradictory toward his good nature, but Remiel is opposed towards God’s decision. Duma’s face is covered in tears because he is emotionally upset with the matter, but he is still compliant with God by taking the key of from Dream. When ruling Hell, Duma continues to be compliant towards God. Remiel says “Why do you not speak? Eh? You are no longer the Angel of Silence. Even now another stands in your place in the Silver City...” (“Episode infinity,” Gaiman). Duma continues his role as the Angel of Silence, even with a change of status.

Lucifer acts bitter towards God. He says “I thought I was rebelling. I thought I was defying his rule. No...I was merely fulfilling another tiny segment of his great and powerful plan” (“Episode 2,” Gaiman). Lucifer is bitter towards God because he feels that all his actions and rebellion were an event foreseen by God and part of God’s plan. Lucifer no longer continues to accomplish God’s plan, and he decides to resign as ruler of Hell.

Dream acts logical and open with God, and he acts submissive to God’s decision over Hell. When Dream says that he has not reached a decision over Hell, Remiel relays

God's message to Dream. Dream listens closely to God's message, and, even with Remiel's disagreement over God's decisions, Dream willingly gives the key to Duma. From this action, the reader is indicated that Dream has already considered and entirely understood God's claim over Hell, and he is in total agreement with his own decision in giving ownership of Hell to God.

Overall, God's depiction in *The Sandman* is similar to Biblical depictions. He is an almighty being that upholds fairness, understanding, patience, forgiveness, and other characteristics related to him, and he is all-knowing. He plays various roles when interacting with other characters, and his interactions influence various events that may seem of minimal importance.

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THE IMMORALITY OF HEROES

by Theresa Buscemi

When we hear the term *hero*, names such as Ghandi, Mother Teresa, and Malala come to mind; we most often think of the greatest and most influential people in all of history due to the word's association with attributes such as courage, selflessness, and righteousness. But does a person have to be just in order to be considered a hero? The ancient hero Gilgamesh proves that this is certainly not the case. Gilgamesh, the powerful warrior king of the ancient city of Uruk, is honored as a hero and is revered for his sovereignty, bravery, and strength; the citizens of Uruk describe him as a "fortress", a "protector of the people", and a "raging flood that destroys all defenses" (Mitchell 71). However, Gilgamesh is not a virtuous ruler for the beginning of his reign: his immoral actions make him make him not only a corrupt king, but even render him a criminal by present day standards! Nevertheless, he is ultimately venerated as a hero in spite of his immorality because of a change of heart that occurs later on in his lifetime. Through the initial period of his kingship Gilgamesh's poor treatment of his citizens, tendency toward selfish pleasures, and prioritization of glory bring to light the reality that

possessing an intrinsic moral compass is not a requirement of a hero.

Although Gilgamesh is a well-respected ruler, the citizens of Uruk suffer for his recklessness. At the beginning of his reign, Gilgamesh disrespects his people so relentlessly that the citizens of Uruk feel that “the city is [Gilgamesh’s] possession, he struts through it, arrogant, his head raised high, trampling its citizens like a wild bull” (Mitchell 72). Though Gilgamesh’s people respect him as king and honor him as a heroic leader, they fear him as people fear a bull who will destroy anything in its path. Suffering from Gilgamesh’s brutality, they cry out to the god Anu: “Is this how you want your king to rule? Should a shepherd savage his own flock?” (Mitchell 73). Gilgamesh’s people praise and respect him, but this respect comes from a place of inner trepidation; the people are afraid of the consequences of Gilgamesh’s malfeasances and the effects his actions will have on them. They voice to Anu their longing for Gilgamesh to act as a shepherd over them; they desire guidance and leadership from their king, in contrast to the dominance and power Gilgamesh exudes through his self-indulgences. The citizens believe that respect for a king should come from a mutual desire for prosperity between a ruler and his citizens, not from fear. However, in spite of his brutality and carelessness, Gilgamesh is considered one of the greatest heroes of his time, which conveys that heroism is not defined by morality.

In addition to maltreating his people for the initial period of his rule, Gilgamesh also conveys his immorality in his tendency toward selfish pleasures. Gilgamesh’s power as king grants him permission from the gods to get whatever will make him happy, regardless of its ethical implications or the consequences it may impose on others. For example, by the will of the gods, Gilgamesh ritually has sex with newlywed virgin brides before their husbands do; it is

described by a man of the city that “the bridegroom will step aside, and the virgin will wait in the marriage bed for Gilgamesh . . . after he is done, the bridegroom follows” (Mitchell 87). Although this tradition is imposed by the gods and is considered a blessing on the marriage, its immorality is prominent nonetheless. This truth of the immorality of this action is exposed when Enkidu, a man who originally lives among the animals and away from civilization, becomes domesticated, relocates to the city of Uruk, and learns of Gilgamesh’s actions. Enkidu understands the innate corruption of this tradition, and he is outraged by the fact that Gilgamesh precedes the groom in the marriage bed, whereas the citizens see nothing wrong with it. This reality conveys that the action is inherently immoral, but the culture of ancient civilization—to which Enkidu has not become accustomed—accepts it. Therefore, Gilgamesh’s manipulation and abuse of his people is corrupt, though not perceived as such by himself or by his people. The hero’s impurity is not altered by the people’s perception; injustice is injustice. Though permitted and oftentimes encouraged by the gods, Gilgamesh’s actions certainly demonstrate that he values self-indulgence over righteousness, further proving that heroes can indeed be unjust.

Another means by which Gilgamesh reveals his depravity is his ego. Gilgamesh discloses that the intention behind his primary heroic deeds is fame; he is more concerned with creating a legacy for himself than with ensuring the well-being of his people. We see this reality in full effect when Gilgamesh resolves to kill the deadly monster Humbaba in the Cedar Forest. Humbaba is notorious for demolishing every creature it encounters, but Gilgamesh’s ego incites him to fight the monster in spite of the risk of losing his life. Gilgamesh’s family, his friends,

and the people of Uruk warn him against confronting the beast, reminding him of its power and deadliness, but Gilgamesh seems to focus only on the glory that would come with defeating it.

Despite the persuasion from his loved ones, Gilgamesh resolves to confront the monster, saying, “I will kill Humbaba, the whole world will know how mighty I am. I will make a lasting name for myself, I will stamp my fame on men’s minds forever” (Mitchell 94). Gilgamesh makes it clear that his purpose in his mission is to create a legacy for himself. Not only does Gilgamesh prioritize his own glory over his citizens’ safety, but he also fails to consider the effect this battle may have on those around him: if Gilgamesh fails, it would not only leave his parents without a son and his best friend without a companion, but it would also leave his people without a ruler! Gilgamesh’s selfishness repeatedly blinds him to the implications of his actions, and his prioritization of legacy over the needs of the people serves as yet another characteristic which makes him a morally corrupt hero.

Gilgamesh’s actions certainly convey that, at least for the beginning of his kingship, Gilgamesh is a very immoral and inconsiderate ruler; however, he is still labeled a hero. This is due to his change of heart, which converts him into a morally upright ruler who values friendship over self-indulgence. Gilgamesh’s conversion from brute authoritarian to humble human occurs when he suffers and grieves over the death of Enkidu, who, despite their initial disagreements, ultimately becomes his dearest friend. This change of heart is exactly what defines Gilgamesh as a hero: he sees the error of his ways and converts to a life of humility and selflessness after he loses his best friend, and for this, he is praised as a hero, in spite of his initial immoral nature.

For the same reason that many of the saints of the Catholic Church are venerated for abandoning a life of sin, Gilgamesh is praised for changing his mindset and becoming a shepherd for his people and a merciful king. Therefore, despite Gilgamesh's oppressive actions at the beginning of his reign, he is still considered a hero, because of his conversion to a life of selflessness and mercy.

At the start of his rule, Gilgamesh portrays himself as a leader whose selfishness and carelessness categorize him in the modern day as more of a villain than a hero. Although his actions are oftentimes excused by the gods and accepted by ancient culture, his immorality is still apparent. Gilgamesh can certainly be categorized as one of the greatest warriors of his time, but his people suffer from his tyranny. This reality ultimately changes when Gilgamesh realizes the error of his ways after Enkidu's death, and resolves to be a considerate and noble king for his people; for this, he is venerated as an eternal hero. In the beginning of his reign, Gilgamesh demonstrates his immoral nature by ruling recklessly, prioritizing self-indulgence and pleasure, and placing more value on his glory than on the prosperity of his citizens. However, in spite of his initial corruption, it is his conversion from injustice into righteousness that makes him a true hero and shows that heroes can indeed be unjust people, at least for a portion of their lifetimes.

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IMMORTALITY OF THE AUTHOR: SYLVIA PLATH
LIVES ON

by Diana Lizotte

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.
(Emily Dickinson)

The Sylvia Plath exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery displays a variety of items from the Sylvia Plath archives at Smith College in Massachusetts and Lilly Library at Indiana University. In the middle of the room is a sculpture made of bell jars that plays music and flashes colored lights. Arrayed around the bell jars are three other display cases containing some of Plath's journals. On the left wall is a display case with a ponytail of her long, red hair. Above it are two photos of her as a young child, and above the photos are some of her book covers, including *Ariel* and *The Bell Jar*. The other walls hold things like letters, drawings, a journal entry, artwork, her Girl Scout uniform with 20 badges, the top of her desk, and a large portrait of her and her two children sitting in a field on a sunny day. The last item in the Sylvia Plath exhibit at the Smithsonian's

National Portrait Gallery is a U.S. postage stamp with Plath's portrait on it. The stamp's studium consists of four notable elements: the portrait photograph of Plath; the word "Plath" in large, red letters underneath the portrait; the phrase "Sylvia Plath / USA" to the right and just below the larger word "Plath"; and the final element, the word "FOREVER" in white block letters shining out from the shadow of Plath's hair. The punctum is that Plath is forever.

Though she committed suicide in 1963, Sylvia Plath is immortal, living on in her archive, the pages of her own work and the work of others who write about her. Though immortality through writing is an ancient concept evidenced in Egyptian scrolls and Romantic epics, postmodernists like Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault try to brush it away in the late 1960s. Continuing the ancient tradition and almost as a preemptive strike against Barthes and Foucault, Sylvia Plath discusses a desire for immortality in her journals and interviews, nearly a decade before Barthes publishes "The Death of the Author." Plath's poems "Burning the Letters," "Ariel," "Stings," and "Lady Lazarus" allude to the concept of immortality: it is as if Plath were an amalgamation of a Greek oracle and Lady Lazarus, foretelling her own end and subsequent writerly resurrection.

The evidence of Plath's immortality is fourfold. First, in a superhuman feat Plath's oeuvre continues to grow, with a new volume of journals due out in 2018. Second, against the postmodernist theory that readers don't need to know the author to divine meaning from a work, readers and critics pour over Plath's archival material to divine the meaning of the pieces in her canon. Third, contrary to postmodernist theory that a work and its author are separate, readers and critics feel that Plath's voice and the work's voice are unified. And fourth, some Plath critics have reported feeling Plath's physical presence when they come in contact with material from her archive. Along with reading her work, critics continue to comment on it, keeping her alive in discourse with each word they read about her and each new word they write. Through this expansion of and attention to what she has written, and the

connection readers and critics feel when they read and touch her work and writerly material, Plath, the author, has never died.

Immortality through writing is an ancient concept, as evidenced both from Egyptian and Roman narratives. In the Papyrus Chester Beatty IV (dated between 1320 BCE to 1085 BCE), ancient Egyptians wrote that writing is a better means to achieving immortality than creating tombs. The scroll reads: "Man decays, his corpse is dust. All his kin have perished; but a book makes him remembered through the mouth of its reciter. Better is a book than a well-built house, than tomb-chapels in the West" (qtd. in David 102). Centuries after the Egyptians, Dante Alighieri wrote about the immortality of the writer in *Inferno*, which was published in 1320. Dante's *Inferno* has many allusions to this tradition of authorial immortality. For example, In Canto VI, Dante, in Hell, meets the glutton, Ciacco. Ciacco implores Dante to talk about him when he leaves Hell and returns to the world of the living. Ciacco asks Dante, "I beg you to remind our friends of me" so that Ciacco's friends will remember him (VI.88-89). Ciacco, and Dante the author, by writing about this concept, consider the act of being spoken of by friends as a means of achieving immortality on earth.

Another allusion to immortality occurs in Canto XV, when Dante is talking to his old tutor, Brunetto Latini. Dante remarks that Latini had shown him "how man makes himself eternal," through the art of writing (XV.85). Dante's guide Virgil, who wrote the *Aeneid*, also talks of his own immortality. Virgil convinces Ulysses to stop and have a conversation by invoking his fame as a poet; Virgil tells Ulysses, "if I have deserved from you much praise or little, / when in the world I wrote my lofty verses, / do not move on;" (XXVI.81-83). Due to Virgil's immortality and fame as a writer, Ulysses stops to talk to him.

Although authorial immortality is woven into human narratives for eons, postmodernists reject the notion. According to Roland Barthes in "Death of the Author," "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique

space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing” (256). At the end of the essay, Barthes declares that the author is dead and only the reader is needed to divine the meaning of a text (257). Another postmodernist, Michel Foucault joins Barthes in declaring the author unimportant to hermeneutics of a text. In his essay, “What is an Author?” Foucault states “[Writing’s relationship with death of the author] subverts an old tradition exemplified by the Greek epic, which was intended to perpetuate the immortality of the hero: if he was willing to die young, it was so that his life, consecrated and magnified by death, might pass into immortality” (206). Foucault brushes away the concept of authorial immortality, stating that instead of producing immortality, the work kills the author; that the writing effaces the author’s “individual characteristics” (206). However, Sylvia Plath’s writing has had the opposite effect on her existence. Like Dante Alighieri, who lives on in the pages of *Inferno*, Plath lives on in her work. Plath’s claim to authorial immortality contradicts Barthes’ and Foucault’s ideas that the author is dead.

Freud claims that none of us can conceive our own mortality, “in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his immortality” (2nd para). But Plath doesn’t leave the concept of immortality buried in her unconscious self; instead she brings it up to the conscious level. She plays with the concept of achieving immortality through writing, death and resurrection in her journals, poetry, and BBC interviews. In her journals, Plath discusses the ideas of death and immortality related to the written word. She sees her works as representing both herself and immortality. In response to *The Yale Review* rejecting her story “Johnny Panic,” Plath states, “so writing is still used as a proof of my identity” (UJSP 460). She dreams of publishing the story in *The Yale Review* and is heartbroken when the magazine rejects it. The rejection makes her question her self-worth, which rests in her writing.

Immortality also rests in her writing, which she discusses in two other journal entries. In the first, she states, “So much working, reading, thinking, living to do. A

lifetime is not long enough [...] Immortality and permanence be damned. Sure I want them, but they are nonexistent, and won't matter when I rot underground" (149). In this passage she feels great pressure to be a perfect writer by which to achieve immortality. Here, she feels that immortality is elusive, but she just hasn't figured out the means of achieving it yet. In a second passage, Plath muses about the lyrics of a dead poetess, alluding to writing as a means of achieving immortality: "So, blown ghost, she comes to our tea, more substantial than many inarticulate mortals. That is strange: the deadness of a stranger who is somehow never dead – the knife of death unfelt, the immortals hover in our heads" (315). Here, Plath feels that although the poetess is dead, she is somehow immortal when Plath hears the words she wrote; the poetess is immortal when her words linger in our minds. In a final journal entry about immortality, Plath muses about how Christ is only a "parable of human renewal and nothing of immortality," indicating that perhaps one doesn't need to be the Son of God to achieve immortality (475). Her journal entries about immortality imply that she was contemplating the procedures necessary for achieving immortality. Some of her other poetry furthers this contemplation.

In "Burning the Letters," "Ariel," and "Stings," Plath elucidates ideas about how to achieve immortality. In "Burning the Letters" she describes how the violent act of dogs rending apart a fox, so that the fox's blood vaporizes in air, leaves an immortal trace on the world:

The dogs are tearing a fox. This is what it is like
A red burst and a cry
That splits from its ripped bag and does not stop
With that dead eye
And the stuffed expression, but goes on
Dyeing the air,
Telling the particles of the clouds, the leaves, the water
What immortality is. That it is immortal. (BTL)

These lines from "Burning the Letters" show the connection Plath makes between a violent end, inscription,

and immortality. The image of a violent, red death makes a lasting impression. This is similar to what Jacques Derrida calls the punctum. In his essay titled, “Roland Barthes,” Derrida describes the punctum as a “point of singularity that punctures the surface,” that inscribes contextual meaning to whoever witnesses it (39). The punctum is like sharp shards of memory, experience, or meaning that are transferred through art (photography, literature, or paintings) into the perceiver’s mind. Thus, Plath’s description of the violent, red, death of the fox is a punctum, indelibly marking the fox’s demise into our memories—making it immortal—through Plath’s words. So, for Plath, a “violent,” “red,” “death” inscribes immortality. Looking closer at Plath’s use of the word “red” provides connections to her other immortality poems.

Plath uses the word “red” to connect death and immortality in “Ariel,” “Stings,” and “Lady Lazarus,” where red is also related to resurrection. In the last six lines of “Ariel” Plath writes:

And I
Am the arrow,

The dew that flies
Suicidal, at one with the drive
Into the red

Eye, the cauldron of morning. (*Ariel* 34)

In *The Poetry Of Sylvia Plath; A Study Of Themes*, Ingrid Melander, ties the color red to themes of death and resurrection. Melander sees the last two lines, “Into the red / Eye, the cauldron of morning” as an “expression of the idea of death as triumph and may also include the notion of possible rebirth...” (101). Melander’s interpretation seems accurate as Plath is a suicidal arrow with singular purpose driving toward dawn, or rebirth. Plath placed “red” at the end of one verse, separating it from “Eye,” give each word prominence. Here, the placement of “suicidal” with “red” seem to represent death, but “red” with “Eye” evokes ideas

of the sun, a celestial being. In human memory, the sun is eternal or immortal. The “cauldron of morning” also seems like a metaphor for the sun at dawn. Dawn is related to birth, with every subsequent dawn a rebirth or resurrection.

Plath uses “red” along with images of death and resurrection in a similar way in the last stanzas of “Stings:”

Is she dead, is she sleeping?
...
Now she is flying
More terrible than she ever was, red
Scar in the sky, red comet
Over the engine that killed her –
The mausoleum, the wax house. (*Ariel* 88)

“Red” is again by itself at the end of a verse, followed by another celestial being, a comet. A red comet would be noticeable and perpetually returning to viewers on earth. This comet is flying, “Over the engine that killed her,” indicating a resurrection from death.

Plath concretizes the resurrection theme in “Lady Lazarus.” In this poem, she writes about a woman who has died three times. It seems that with each death act she learns something new about the art of dying and resurrection. At the end of the poem, the lady rises from the ashes. In a BBC interview, Plath states, “Lady Lazarus” is about “a woman who has the great and terrible gift of being reborn. The only trouble is, she has to die first. She is the phoenix, the libertarian spirit, what you will” (as quoted in Melander 103). In the poem, Plath uses several words to allude to the resurrected male Lazarus of John 11 in the Bible. She uses “miracle” twice, “Jew linen,” “grave,” “cave,” “unwrap me,” and “rocked shut” (*Ariel* 14). These words describe the scene of Jesus’s miraculous resurrection of Lazarus who had been wrapped in burial linen and laid in a grave (a cave with a rock barring the door) when Jesus came and performed the miracle of raising him from the dead. Instead of being about a male resurrection, Plath informs us that the rebirth in “Lady Lazarus” is about a woman by including the word “Lady” in the title, and

referring us to the woman subject in the seventh stanza, “And I a smiling woman” (*Ariel* 14). Several lines mark this woman’s ability to rise from the dead:

[...]I have nine times to die.

This is Number Three.

What a trash

To annihilate each decade. (*Ariel* 14)

In these lines we learn that this woman is on her third death and dies every ten years. Plath has capitalized “Number Three,” not only giving title to the woman’s third death, but also invoking the sacred number three that represents the holy trinity; the past, present, and future of eternity. Several stanzas later, we learn that she sees dying linked to art—something that has to be practiced, but something that she has mastered: “Dying / is an art, like everything else. / I do it exceptionally well” (15). And at the poem’s end, there is again that word “red” that twines together death and resurrection: “Out of the ash / I rise with my red hair / And I eat men like air” (17). Here is the image of the red phoenix, rising out of the ashes, a resurrected self that transcends men. And this is what Sylvia Plath has done—figured out the way to rise up out of her own death to achieve immortality.

Plath accomplishes this through her writing. In the manner of an immortal being, her oeuvre continues to grow, keeping her alive with each new addition. As a refutation of the postmodernists’ assessment that the author is dead, Plath remains relevant to readers and critics who consult Plath’s archival material to discern the meaning of her poems, find it difficult to dissociate the author Plath from her poems and other works, and feel her presence when handling her archive.

Plath died on February 11, 1963 at the age of 30, but she lives on through her body of work. Before her death, Plath had only published two volumes of work, *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1962) and *The Bell Jar* (January 1963). However, in a superhuman feat, she continues to

publish; her oeuvre grows almost yearly. Since her death, seventeen other works have been published in her name. Even over fifty years after her death, she is still publishing material: volume I of her letters was published in 2017 and volume II is forthcoming in 2018. In the small Marymount University library alone, there are 55 books in the Sylvia Plath section. Of these, 45 are biographies and criticisms. Many of the critics who write about Plath discuss themes of being and resurrection. They have titles like: *Plath's Incarnations*, by Lynda Bundtzen; *Ariel Ascending*, by Paul Alexander; *Sylvia Plath: Poetry and Existence*, by David Holbrook; *Revising Life*, by Susan R. Van Dyne; *Representing Sylvia Plath*, by Sally Bayley and Tracy Brain; and *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, by Jacqueline Rose. Critics and biographers can't seem to write enough about both her life and her works and they don't see how you can read Plath, and really understand her poems, without knowing her history.¹

Through her estate, Plath published *Letters Home* in 1987. Critics found it helpful in understanding Plath and

¹ It would be naive to say that there are not critics who claim that Plath and her voice are separate. Some critics (e.g., Sarah Churchwell in "Ted Hughes and the Corpus of Sylvia Plath," Jacqueline Rose in *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, Diane Van Dyne in "The Problem of Biography," and Linda Wagner-Martin in *Sylvia Plath: A Biography*) have chafed at allegations of Plath's immortality, especially by Plath's husband, Ted Hughes, that Plath and her work are unified and so Plath is immortal. For example, Churchwell feels that it is Hughes who is trying to immortalize Plath by claiming that Plath the poet and the voice in her poems are unified so that he can claim immortality through her. But even Churchwell uses Plath's poem to prove that Sylvia rejects Hughes' romantic notions, stating, "But Sylvia Plath, in her poem 'The Detective,' explicitly rejects such a romance narrative: 'This is a case without a body. The body does not come into it at all,'" which is an example of Churchwell unifying the voice of Plath (the body) and her poetry's voice (the voice in "The Detective") (127).

her works. One critic, Linda Wagner-Martin, wrote, “*Letters Home* is an immensely valuable work and I am grateful Mrs. [Aurelia] Plath and Ted Hughes let it be published. It adds so much to our understanding of Plath” (208). Wagner-Martin is not alone in feeling that archival material about Plath lends to understanding Plath. This is because Plath’s writing is highly personal. According to Ingrid Melander, in *The Poetry Of Sylvia Plath; A Study Of Themes*, “allusions to autobiographical data unknown to the reader probably limits the chance to grasp certain lines or paragraphs even further” (79). Due to the autobiographical nature of Plath’s writing, critics often refer to Plath’s archive to diving meaning from her poems and other texts.

Critics who consult Plath’s archival material to discern meaning from specific texts include David Holbrook and Lynda Bundtzen. In *Sylvia Plath: Poetry and Existence*. Holbrook refers to Plath’s biography for meaning in the Bee poems. Holbrook interprets “The Beekeeper’s Daughter” in terms of Plath’s relationship with her father, who died when Plath was eight years old and who was a bumblebee expert. In the lines,

Father, bridegroom, in this Easter egg
Under the coronal of sugar roses

‘The queen bee marries the winter of your year. (*Collusus*
75)

Holbrook sees the “Father” as Plath’s father, with whom the poem’s child wishes to be reunited. Holbrook states “Daddy, the expert on bumblebees, the maestro with his baton [...] the image expresses the child’s desire to mate with her father and to find herself in him” (213). Holbrook also uses the fact of Plath’s father death along with the poem’s reference to “Easter,” the time of Christ’s resurrection, as an indication that Plath ties resurrection to a union with her dead father. In yet another poem, “The Bee Meeting,” Holbrook uses other archival material from Plath’s life to interpret the poem as one depicting a schizoid personality. Holbrook uses Plath’s reference to a bell jar to

interpret the meaning of the line "A curtain of wax dividing them from the bride flight" (*Ariel* 82). Holbrook states, "Only a 'curtain of wax' (a wall of glass, a bell jar) seems to divide her from the 'bride flight', and the discovery of gratitude and touch with reality" (219). A bell jar, as Plath described in her novel by the same name, is Plath's metaphor for her propensity to remain trapped in her own head, replaying thoughts of self-doubt and alterity that separate her from reality. Thus, Holbrook uses Plath's metaphor to interpret her poem.

Lynda Bundtzen uses Plath's archival material to examine the meaning of Plath's work. In "Poetic Arson and Sylvia Plath's "Burning the Letters," Bundtzen refers to first-person accounts of events, Plath biographies, and Plath's other poems for insight into the meaning of Plath's poem "Burning the Letters." In "Burning the Letters," Plath describes the sights and sounds of burning her husband Ted's letters that she retrieves from his attic study after finding out he has been having an affair. To decipher the poem, Bundtzen first consults the memoir of Plath's neighbor, Clarissa Roche, who witnesses the pyre that Plath created (438-9). Then, Bundtzen uses Linda Wagner-Martin's 1987 biography of Plath, which discusses "a mysterious phone call for Ted" which took place on July 10th, after which Plath "tore the telephone wires from the wall" (439). Bundtzen feels that the best evidence for what happened when Plath found out who was Ted's mistress was in an earlier Plath poem, "Words Heard, by Accident, Over the Phone" (440). The poem, composed on July 11, 1962 describes a room "ahiss," a word that suggests whispers between lovers, but also sounds like the mistress's name, Assia (440). To determine the meaning of "Burning the Letters," Bundtzen clearly does not ignore the author—for her, the author is not dead—instead she refers to Plath's archival material and poems for context.

Another indication that critics and readers do not ignore Plath when interpreting her work occurs when they do not distinguish between Plath's voice and the voice in her texts. Foucault said that once a work is written, it kills

the author, there is no unified voice, but with Plath, the two are intricately tied and so Plath lives whenever a reader or critic read her texts. Critics who see a unified voice in Plath and her texts include Melander, A. Alvarez, Nichole LeFebvre, Theresa Collins, and Cynthia Sugars

Melander feels that Lady Lazarus is “clearly autobiographical” (103). She agrees with critic A. Alvarez specifically regarding “Lady Lazarus” being Plath’s voice. Alvarez states “The deaths of Lady Lazarus correspond to her own crises: the first just after her father died, the second when she had her nervous breakdown, the third perhaps a presentiment of the death that was shortly to come” (quoted in Melander 103). Melander feels that Alvarez’ comments combined with Plath’s “Lady Lazarus” interview on BBC relates the poem’s dilemma of resurrection through death not only to Lady Lazarus, but to the poet’s persona/narrator and “the poet herself” (103).

Another critic who sees Plath and Lady Lazarus as the same person is Nichole LeFebvre. In “A Tale Of Two Sylvias: On The Letters Cover Controversy—What Do We Look For In A Literary Icon?” LeFebvre feels that Lady Lazarus and Plath are the same woman. “Even in a poem like “Lady Lazarus”—in which Plath calls death “the big striptease” and brags about the “very large charge” for a glimpse at her scars—the tone is chirpy and flirtatious, with those trademark round vowels and confident, declarative lines. It’s this allure—delicious poison—that makes her poetry so powerful, so lasting” (4, last paragraph). Here, LeFebvre thinks about Plath’s “trademark round vowels and confident, declarative lines,” indicating that LeFebvre is imagining Plath’s voice reading the words in the poem. Plath’s voice is available on Youtube, from BBC interviews or other recordings available in which Plath reads her own poetry. For LeFebvre, Plath’s poetry is “powerful” and “lasting” because of Plath’s sexual allure and “delicious poison.” LeFebvre feels that Plath “flirts you close enough to burn you” (5, first paragraph).

Theresa Collins also considers Plath and the “Lady Lazarus” narrator to be unified. In “Plath’s Lady Lazarus” Collins reads the poem as the poet becoming immortal.

“The poem is a confession, with all of its autobiographical similarities. The poet's familiar exhibitionist style is her own artistic device to have us stirring through her ash remains (her poem) like the Nazi doctor (73-75). As a stylite monk would grow closer to God through his self-discipline, Plath becomes closer to being her own artistic god through her poetic performance” (158). Again Collin rejects the postmodernists reading of texts and sees Plath unified with her work.

Cynthia Sugars feels that Plath and her work are “inseparable” (2). In “Sylvia Plath as Fantasy Space; Or, the Return of the Living Dead” Sugars states that critics can’t disentangle Plath’s personal life from her work. She states, “In this way the biography of Plath becomes inseparable from the Plath canon” (2). Sugars agrees with critics who believe that Plath’s suicide has “frozen her outside of time” (2). By reading and criticizing her texts, Sugars feels that critics keep Plath alive. With each new criticism, “The critics exist as uncanny doubles of Plath herself” (3). This dialogue between critic and Plath’s canon makes Plath live on.

Another way she lives on is when critics feel Plath’s presence when they read her texts or touch her belongings. Two critics who have felt this presence are LeFebvre and Tracy Brain. LeFebvre feels a visceral presence when she looks at Plath’s personal books. While getting her MFA at the University of Virginia, LeFebvre was able to hold some of Plath’s private books. LeFebvre is “giddy” as she sees Plath’s handwriting in the margins and Plath’s penmanship impresses her, “the perfect posture of her “y” and “l,” her rounded v, the slight ink smudge along the h’s tail” (5, paragraph 1). LeFebvre then states that she feels a privileged rush because her hands were where Plath’s had been (5, paragraph 1). “The feeling was almost too much,” say LeFebvre, “I leaned forward to listen” (5, paragraph 1). LeFebvre feels that she is communion with Plath, listening to her through her belongings.

In *The Other Sylvia Plath*, Tracy Brain also describes “skinbristling” moments working with Plath’s archives (34). Brain feels a connection with Plath through her letters and

other archival material and states that soon Plath's handwriting becomes familiar (34). Brain relays how she meets with Plath through a "strong sense of her physical presence and [her] own contact with the material residues that she left behind. Those who work in the archives trail their hands over letters covered in Plath's fingerprints, open letters that she licked before smoothing them shut on her DNA" (31). This is similar to LeFebvre's feelings of Plath's presence when handling Plath's books. In these types of experiences, Plath also lives on.

Plath is immortal. Her own journals and interviews describe her thoughts on immortality and her poems discuss the ideas of dying and rising up after death. Her oeuvre continues to grow, even after her human death. Critics consult Plath's archival material to more fully understand and find a unified voice in Plath the author and the voice in her texts. Some critics feel her presence when they touch her archival material. All of this contravenes the notion proposed by postmodernists that the author is dead. Through her increasing oeuvre and the connection that critics feel between both Plath and her texts and between themselves and Plath's archive, Plath, the author, has never died.

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ANXIETY OVER GENDER





REST IN PEACE

by John Renkiewicz

Much has been written regarding French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes' theory pertaining to the death of the author which was in simple terms removing the author in an interpretation of the text and taking the text upon its own value. Prior to Barthes' theory it was popular for critics to look at an author's background in interpreting a text. I acknowledge that there are instances when only knowledge of the author's basic information is necessary to guide you to a work. For example, one is bound to be immediately able to identify the basic genres of authors such as James Patterson, Stephen King, or John Grisham yet one does not need to know or recognize the author to enjoy their novels. However, having a deeper knowledge of the author may assist a reader in appreciating the text more fully as well as furthering one's knowledge of the author.

A primary case that comes to mind is Ernest Hemingway. In 1926 his debut novel *The Sun Also Rises* was published. It was, and is, heralded as a new mode of modern writing. It is relatively uncontested that the writing style was a breakthrough at the time; however, what is not clear is whether it was truly a novel or it was an excellent piece of journalistic or travelogue writing which were Hemingway's primary forms of employment. Knowledge of

the author is important in answering this question. Answering this question is important as to whether to laud the author for his exquisite work of fiction or conversely pan him for doing nothing more than cataloging the events in his life. In *Everybody Behaves Badly* Lesley M. M. Blume makes a compelling argument for the latter. The novel relates the relationships and activities of various characters that are based upon actual events and persons that are thinly disguised within the text.

According to Blume, some joked a more appropriate title for the novel would be “Six Characters in Search of an Author – with a Gun Apiece” (203). The *Saturday Review of Literature* informed readers that not a single one of Hemingway’s characters could be credited with being the product of the author’s imagination (ditto for the events that inspired the plot), implying that the book was more an example of incisive reportage than fictional accomplishment (Blume 204). Some of the characters and their real-life counterparts were Robert Cohn as Harold Loeb, a one-time friend and supporter of Hemingway prior to the publication of *The Sun Also Rises*. Lady Brett Ashley was inspired by Lady Duff Twysden; the nineteen-year-old matador Romero was actually Cayetano Ordonez who Lady Twysden most likely corrupted in the same manner as Lady Ashley corrupted Romero in the novel (Blume 113). Mike Campbell, Brett’s suitor, was in fact Pat Guthrie “a dissipated thirty-something Briton with a rumored aristocratic lineage . . . he was a relentless drinker . . . [who] couldn’t hold his alcohol” (Blume 86). The list goes on and the events portrayed by the characters were, for the most part, actual events. In the original manuscript, Hemingway had used the real-life names of the characters and his publisher, Maxwell Perkins, feared a lawsuit before their removal (Blume 203).

A question arises on whether Jake Barnes is Hemingway or vice versa. Some would argue that he is not due to him not fulfilling the Hemingway macho persona. For example, Jake displays a sensitive side in being a sounding board for Brett. Also, Jake is impotent—something Hemingway would probably never admit to even if it were

true. In the original manuscript Hemingway uses the name “Hem” for Jake which pretty much seals the speculation anyone would have on the question of Jake/Hemingway. I posit that Jake is Hemingway’s first foray into emasculation which he later delves into in great detail in *The Garden of Eden*. Here is where knowing more about the author deeply comes into play.

Is it critical to the work to know that Hemingway most likely had gender identification issues which would explain his fascination with “deviant” sexual behavior? Probably not. One can still “enjoy” the work as it stands on one’s reading of the text. However, it makes the text more interesting and understandable to be able to approach it with some semblance of the author’s stance on the issues. For example, Dean Koontz in his early works always included a Golden Retriever somewhere within the text. Why? Because Koontz works with a charity that brings service dogs to people with disabilities (Pfeiffer). In his latter works, the retrievers don’t always appear, but some sort of dog does and often plays a significant role in the story. Knowledge necessary to the text? No, but it does answer a question one may have regarding an aspect of the text.

Identifying Hemingway’s foray into the feminine clarifies his choice of textual structures. There have been a number of guesses as to Hemingway’s true sexuality ranging from his being a homosexual to a sexual masochist; few identify him as being transgender; however, I posit that given the opportunity, that is the direction Hemingway would have taken to assuage his sexual confusion. Clues to this assertion appear both in his work and in his personal life. In his personal life, a certain macho image of Hemingway was developed as a hard drinking, gun toting, womanizing character. This “over the top” machismo may have been his cover for a more feminine private persona that he did not want to become public. His lead male characters portray a sensitivity, and finally femininity, that Hemingway himself would not publicly admit to, starting with Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* and culminating with David Bourne in *The Garden of Eden*. Hemingway portrays

Jake as a virtual Janus having the face of a man's man, but with the ability to understand and comfort a woman in a sisterly fashion in his interactions with Brett. All while being physically unable to consummate a male/female sexual relationship due to impotence sustained from a war wound. With Jake, Hemingway appeared to feel the need to find a manly way to feminize his character.

By the time Hemingway penned David, he did not feel the need to hide behind the tactic he took with Jake. Perhaps he never intended the book to be published, as he began it in 1946 and worked on it intermittently for the 15 years until his death, but then why write it at all? David is, like Jake, a veteran of the First World War; like Jake (and Hemingway) he is a writer. Note the transition: prior to *The Sun Also Rises* Hemingway primarily earned his living as a journalist à la Jake; by 1946 Hemingway was primarily earning his keep as a novelist, as was the David character. David on the surface is to Hemingway as night is to day. David is submissive to his wife Catherine. Sexually, he plays the girl to Catherine's role as a boy while physically he adopts the same hairstyle and, in some cases, manner of dress as his wife.

In *The Garden of Eden* the following exchange occurs between Catherine and David:

[Catherine] "You are changing," she said. "Oh you are. You are. Yes you are and you're my girl Catherine. Will you change and be my girl and let me take you?"

[David] "You're Catherine."

[Catherine] "No. I'm Peter. You're my wonderful Catherine. You're my beautiful lovely Catherine. You were so good to change. Oh thank you, Catherine, so much. Please understand. Please know and understand. I'm going to make love to you forever." (17)

What makes the preceding so telling as a part of Hemingway's actual life is the sex-change fantasies Mary Hemingway recounts from a 1953 African safari in her memoir quoting from her diary. Papa Hemingway established a "New Names Department," rechristening

himself as “Kathrin Ernest Hemingway” and [Mary] as “Peter Mary Welsh-Hemingway” (qtd. in Rohy 149).

In the novel, life with Catherine begins to unravel after she brings another woman, Marita, into the relationship. David stands by as Catherine first maintains Marita as a lover for herself and then acquiesces to taking on Marita as a lover as well. David and Catherine come up with a schedule for who will be with who when. Marita’s presence allows David to act as a typical male lover and resume his role as a man while he retains his femininity with Catherine. Does David/Hemingway maintain his manhood by submitting to sodomy by Catherine (Eby 79)? Is it a gender or sexual dysfunction per se? Then again, does one being a homosexual disallow machismo? I think not, but in Hemingway’s era “gender bending” or being bi-sexual would not be acceptable to maintaining a macho image.

A quick look at Hemingway’s childhood may explain some of his actions and desires as a man. His mother, Grace, dressed him in girl’s clothes and referred to him as his sister Marcelline’s, twin as they were born only a year apart. They slept in the same room, played with the same dolls, and literally lived as sisters until Ernest was about five years old (Lynn 38-40). Basic formative development occurs from birth until two years of age at which point around age two a child identifies himself or herself as a boy or a girl. Preschoolers associate toys, clothing, games, colors, etc. with one gender or another (Berk 117, 211). It is unclear whether gender identification is a result of genetic or environmental factors (Dunn and Craig 345), but considering how Ernest was raised during his formative years and the fact that social factors may influence gender identification it appears likely that Grace’s influence may have played a role in Ernest’s later gender explorations. According to J. Gerald Kennedy, a biography of Ernest Hemingway by Kenneth Lynn argues,

...that Hemingway was afflicted from childhood onward by gender anxiety as a consequence of his mother’s dressing the boy as a girl and passing him off as the same-sex twin of his sister Marcelline. To

compensate for early insecurity about his gendered role, Hemingway affected an exaggerated bravado, Lynn claims, and pursued activities which would exhibit male prowess. Yet recurrently in private life and more overtly in writing, he manifested a preoccupation with gender-crossing which expressed itself (Lynn asserts) in his fondness—as a man and as a writer—for short-haired women. (191-192)

Papa Hemingway's interest in gender-crossing comes through in a conversation with his transsexual son Gregory who was also known affectionately as Gigi: "Listen, Mr. Gig, I can remember a long time ago seeing a girl on a street in Paris and wanting to go over and kiss her just because she had so much damn red lipstick caked on. I wanted to get that lipstick smeared all over my lips, just so I could see what it felt like" ("Papa's Boys"). This comment implies a certain fascination of Papa's own with adopting a woman's appearance.

Papa became aware of Gregory's cross-dressing when he was caught climbing into a pair of white nylons at about age 10. Hemingway blamed his divorced wife Pauline for Gigi's apparently 'unmanly' ways. In 1951, when Gigi was 19, he went to a cinema in Los Angeles in drag and was arrested entering the women's toilet (Lewis). Pauline notified Papa by telephone in Cuba and they commenced to have a screaming match over the phone with each blaming the other for Gregory's miscreant ways. At about 1:00 a.m. Pauline awoke with terrible abdominal pain and was taken to the hospital where she died of shock on the operating table three hours later. Hemingway blamed Gigi's arrest for causing his mother's condition while Gigi insisted that it was Papa's haranguing of Pauline that caused her to die due to emotional distress. In a letter to his father when he turned 21 Gregory wrote:

You accused me of killing her—said it was my arrest that killed her. For your information, a heart condition is incurred over a period of time. Do you think that little scene did her any good? I would never think of

accusing you of killing her ... but you accused me, you cocksucker—you wonder if I don't forget all and kiss your sickly ass when you send me a birthday greeting? You think you can repair a break in the dam with a telegram? God have mercy on your soul for the misery you have caused. If I ever meet you again and you start pulling the ruthless, illogical and destructive shit on me, I will beat your head into the ground and mix it with cement to make outhouses. (*Hemingway's Boat* 556)

There was a P.S. added to the letter: "I suppose you wonder what has happened to all my filial respect for you. Well, it's gone Ernestine, dear, it's gone!" (*Hemingway's Boat* 556) It is interesting that their original disagreement over Pauline's death happened just a few short months after it occurred, when they met in person, but seemed to come to a head on the occasion of Gigi's twenty-first birthday. After their initial meeting when Gregory was 19, he and his father never saw each other until Ernest's death although they remained close through correspondence.

Gregory's feminization of his father's name may be telling in that as a transvestite and later a transsexual he could see through Papa's machismo and know that the two were more alike than Papa would ever admit. In "Papa's Boys" Hendrickson wonders, "There are Freudians afoot – especially in light of so much of the recent Hemingway scholarship, and the publication last year of his novel *The Garden of Eden*, which is awash in transsexual fantasies – who would raise the question: was the son merely acting out what the father felt?"

Rohy would not identify Hemingway as transgendered (168), but I differ in that regard. Hemingway had a penchant for writing truth as fiction as is so aptly demonstrated in *The Sun Also Rises* as well *Islands in the Stream*—the only novel in which he directly used his children. It stands to reason that a certain amount of Papa lives in *The Garden of Eden* as it does in his other novels and stories. Rohy herself writes,

. . . Hemingway did not suffer the stigma that most transgender people endure; indeed, he retained the dubious privilege of stigmatizing others. (His macho reputation seems to license today's critics [circa 2011] to devalue his femininity, as if demonstrating their loyalty to that other Hemingway.) Despite his self-consciousness about being differently gendered, he would hardly have identified with a trans community, even had the term been available to him. He seemed to think he had personally invented male femininity, "something quite new and outside all tribal law," though he did recognize his likeness to his transsexual son Gregory. (qtd. in Mary Welsh Hemingway 370)

Do Hemingway's gender issues have any bearing on our understanding of the text of *The Garden of Eden*? Perhaps in and of itself no, however we have a better understanding of the author and given his reputation can see why he never chose to finish the novel in his lifetime, just as he kept other gender questions and comments to the confines of Mary's diary rather than making them public. Additionally, this knowledge of the author gives us insight into the text itself to better understand its origin and significance.

Richard Fantina points out late 20th and early 21st century criticism which notes Hemingway's "homoerotic wishes," "suppressed femininity," "transvestic impulses," and "'queer' desires" (85). In *The Sun Also Rises* Jake Barnes is the embodiment of what Kaja Silverman calls "phallic divestiture." The abolition of the phallic signifier in the hero conforms to Silverman's reading of a cultural production that consciously undermines an obsolete equation of the penis and phallic power (qtd. in Fantina 86). Fantina also notes:

In Hemingway's work the male heroes seldom penetrate women but rather are sometimes penetrated themselves . . . the most vivid description of penetration . . . occurs when Catherine Bourne sodomizes her husband in *The Garden of Eden* . . . she [tells him] "I'm Peter. You're my wonderful

Catherine.” Catherine’s appropriation of the phallic name Peter gives some indication of what transpires here.

[David] lay there and felt something and then her hand holding him and searching lower and he helped with his hands and then laid back in the dark and did not think at all and only felt the weight and the strangeness inside and she said, “Now you can’t tell who is who can you?” (*GoE* 17)

Later the narrator [in the *Garden of Eden*] relates that, [Catherine] made the dark magic of the change again and he did not say no when she spoke to him and asked him the questions and he felt the change so that it hurt him all through and when it was finished after they were both exhausted she was shaking and she whispered to him, “Now we have done it. Now we have really done it.” (*GoE* 20)

This description remains uncharacteristically explicit for Hemingway. A crossed-out phrase in the unpublished manuscript contains more graphic detail describing how David feels “something that yielded and entered.” What “yielded” can only be David’s sphincter and what “entered” refers to the device – her fingers or some object – that Catherine uses to penetrate him. (Fantina 92-93)

There can be little doubt that Fantina is correct in his assertion of David being sodomized by Catherine in this scene. With the David character so closely resembling Hemingway and the characters named as Hemingway named himself and Mary in her diary there can be little doubt that the incident actually occurred in Hemingway’s life or at the very least was fantasized about.

Looking at Jake Barnes’s wound-induced impotence and David Bourne’s submissiveness to Catherine, Hemingway’s work “rather than exalting the male phallus . . . constantly seeks to dethrone it” (Fantina 97). Hemingway appears to endorse sodomy on a male if it

is performed by a female (Fantina 97). Fantina goes on to say,

While male-on-female and male-on-male sodomy both have long literary traditions, novelists seldom portray female-on-male sodomy in their fiction. Hemingway's overt use of such sodomy as the expression of the physical love between Catherine and David Bourne in *The Garden of Eden* remains remarkable because of this rarity. (97)

He later adds that:

. . . since homosexuality is not an option for Hemingway [his homophobia exists throughout his writings], he needs the phallic woman to perform the chosen sexual act and to otherwise dominate his male heroes. (103)

Carl Eby has much more to say about sodomy and transvestism in Hemingway's work. Eby writes,

"Catherine's searching hand, I will argue, does indeed sodomize David – but in doing so serves as the catalyst for something still more unusual and profound: a transvestic hallucination . . . [there is] a kindred group of cryptic transvestic metamorphoses in *The Garden of Eden*, the *Islands in the Stream* manuscript, *Across the River and into the Trees*, and *True at First Light*. In each passage, the male protagonist enters a state of "not thinking" and then, aided by fetishistic/transvestic ritual and some form of anal penetration, hallucinates that he is physically transformed into a "girl." What [is interesting] is not just the heterosexual sodomizing of the male protagonist . . . but rather the intensity of the male protagonist's conviction that he has been physically transformed into a girl, however temporarily, by this act." (79)

As Hemingway writes in *The Garden of Eden*, “she had made the dark magic of the change again and he did not say no when she spoke to him and asked the questions and he felt the change so that it hurt him all through” (20). When taken together with the entries in his fourth and final wife’s, Mary’s, diary it seems certain that Hemingway’s “fiction” in *The Garden of Eden* is in essence more reporting as in *The Sun Also Rises*.

Eby shares parts of Mary’s book *How It Was* in his piece on Hemingway. The following observations from Mary’s work further support Papa Hemingway having gender issues:

. . . many, if not most, of us know about Hemingway’s sexcapades during his 1953 safari: his entries in his wife’s diary calling himself Mary’s “girl” and calling Mary his “boy” . . . his obsession with cutting and bleaching Mary’s hair; his decision to shave his own head like a Kamba girl [and] dye his clothes rusty Masai ochre . . . and his desire to pierce his ears and undergo tribal scarification (a drive strong enough that Mary called it the “earring crisis” and had to struggle to talk him out of it). Sodomy, too, has its place in this pattern. On 3 November Mary noted in her journal “Papa’s definition of buggery: ‘Sodomy when practiced by those who are not gentlemen.’” And then there is the well-known mock interview “with recondite magazine” that Ernest wrote in Mary’s diary on 19 December and which Mary reprinted in *How It Was*:

REPORTER: ‘Mr. Hemingway, is it true that your wife is a lesbian?’

PAPA: ‘Of course not. Mrs. Hemingway is a boy.’

REPORTER: ‘What are your favorite sports, sir?’

PAPA: ‘Shooting, fishing, reading and sodomy.’

REPORTER: ‘Does Mrs. Hemingway participate in these sports?’

PAPA: ‘She participates in all of them.’

REPORTER: ‘Sir, can you compare fishing, shooting and cricket, perhaps, with the other sports you practice?’

PAPA: 'Young man, you must distinguish between the diurnal and the nocturnal sports. In this later category sodomy is definitely superior to fishing.' (83)

On 20 December Ernest again wrote in Mary's diary "[Mary] always wanted to be a boy" and "loves me to be her girl, which I love to be, not being absolutely stupid" (Eby 84).

Eby supports my conjecture regarding Hemingway's childhood in his 1999 book *Hemingway's Fetishism* where he argues that

a splitting of the ego was rooted in Hemingway's childhood and manifested itself in his adulthood in the split-off other-sex half of his ego that Hemingway named "Catherine." Such split-off other-sex halves of the ego are commonplace in fetishism and central to transvestism . . . this is the key to understanding the role of heterosexual sodomy in Hemingway's life and fiction. (86)

Note how, in essence, knowing the author is key to understanding their life and writing according to Eby. Which brings us back to Barthes' famous essay "The Death of the Author."

Barthes ends his essay with the words, "the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author;" however, if we are to follow Hemingway's Iceberg Theory of Writing where 1/8 is the surface reading and the remaining 7/8 is below the surface, then knowledge of the author may contribute to understanding that 7/8 which is "hidden." Unfortunately, such knowledge may come at a price. I enjoy reading Hemingway's works for their entertainment value, for a look at the past, for insight into the times in which they are set; there is knowledge to be gained even from the reading of fiction. Unfortunately, Hemingway was a Janus much as Jake Barnes is—he could be kind and generous but also one of the most rotten son-of-a-bitches to ever walk this earth. He was a troubled soul who, if he had not committed suicide in 1961 at the age of

61, probably would have died an early death due to various maladies attributed to his hard drinking, hard living lifestyle. Researching his life and writing this piece has made me feel as if I was pissing on his grave. It has been 56 years since his physical death and we are still dissecting his life. Perhaps we should let him and all authors finally rest in peace.

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TACTICAL SUBMISSION IN *LEAN IN FOR GRADUATES*
by Micaela Healy

The question that both constructs and consumes Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In: For Graduates* (2014), her not-self-help, pseudo-feminist-manifesto work, is how women can succeed in a systemically sexist corporate world without having eliminated the cultural and social barriers to female empowerment. There is still much to be done for women in social power struggles, but this is not what concerns Sandberg. She accepts the imperfect corporate world, and argues that the way we change it is through infiltration, working its systems to someday rewrite them. Sandberg's book instructs how to pry success from a system meant to stereotype and discount women by teaching them when to 'lean in' to assumptions about gender for benefit and when to subvert them to avoid being harmed. She would describe the work as various bits of advice, but I identify a pattern to it, and refer to this planned behavior as 'tactical submission.'

Before one can examine the efficacy of this behavior, one must determine what Sandberg identifies as stereotypical femininity. She makes it clear that women are naturally meek and insecure, and must overcome their deep-seated desire to relegate themselves to a minor position. Sandberg expresses that women must learn to "sit at the table", but she also understands the "insecurities that [draw]

them to the side of the room” (p. 34, 35). Women are deeply communal beings, required to seem emotionally available and supportive to their coworkers, depending on mentor relationships and on their partners; Sandberg believes that “the single most important decision that a woman makes is whether she will have a life partner and who that partner is” (p. 82, 138). This partner is typically male, as the heterosexuality of the ‘everywoman’ Sandberg constructs is presumed constantly. Women wait for “Prince Charming”, and are advised to “date all of them: the bad boys, the cool boys, the commitment-phobic boys, the crazy boys” before settling down (p. 84, 154). The two sole mentions of homosexuality are one brief reference to a statistic insinuating their more evenly divided domestic labor and one daring remark about “finding the right guy — or gal” (Sandberg 2014, p. 145, 146). Sandberg asserts that women are naturally mothering, with biological clocks that “demand we have children”, but “overcome biology with consciousness in other areas” (p. 18, 136); they are emotional, vulnerable, volatile, and will often be drawn to tears as a means of “expressing [their] truth” but are still non-threatening (p. 113). Sandberg has a very precise definition of womanhood which is coded both white and heterosexual. This is significant, as only this specific type of womanhood may enact tactical submission. To emulate what comprises the image of black femininity, for example, would not play to the standardized idea of ‘woman,’ and would be less opportune for tactical submission. To be clear, Sandberg is not aware that her image of women is so white, though she recognizes briefly that women of color do often struggle much more than white women before dispensing entirely with the notion. What can only be assumed, then, is that women of color are expected to emulate white femininity as described in *Lean In* in order to employ tactical submission and benefit.

Having identified Sandberg’s conception of womanhood, we must now examine her observations of women’s behavior: what must change and what must be used. Women have, as she previously asserts, some powerful compulsion toward communal and kindness-

driven behaviors. With women, kindness is simply expected. “She’s communal, right? She wants to help others” (Sandberg 2014, p. 56). Even though women take on much uncompensated work in this way, they generally believe they deserve rewards which will come to them if they simply work hard enough. Sandberg discourages this reliance on recognition, criticizing “Tiara Syndrome,” the belief in a meritocracy in which all work is rewarded fairly, and “tiaras are doled out to the deserving” (p. 80). *Lean In* is bedazzled with statistics on the behaviors of women as any tiara ought to be decked in flashy gems, but, just as with those decorative stones, the sourcing of these statistics matters. Many of them attempt to describe why women hold themselves back, or why they deceive themselves into underperforming. The significance of these statistics should be taken with a grain of salt, though; Sandberg repeatedly cites studies conducted by firms as if these are not spearheaded by those in power — namely men. In the words of de la Barre: “All that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit” (as cited in de Beauvoir, 2006, p. 118-119). This criticism noted, however, we’ll progress under the generous assumption that these studies hold little or no bias to reach our next point.

Some behaviors associated with Sandberg’s notion of femininity are discouraged and others are praised by her, depending on their utility. Meekness, for example, is undesirable because it causes one to be ‘out of the game,’ so to speak — more a spectator than a participant in or advocate for their careers. Others, such as communal attitudes, can make women into very productive and desirable workers. “Whenever possible, women should substitute ‘we’ for ‘I’” because “showing concern for the common good, even as they negotiate for themselves, will strengthen their position” (Sandberg 2014, p. 59, 61). In each case, Sandberg examines individual traits of femininity and their role in female submission as separable and disposable components of the image of womanhood. They can be naturally womanly traits, but women must not necessarily embody them. The decision to play into societal

beliefs with communal speech but to assert oneself over the assumed meekness — Coleman calls this to be “relentlessly pleasant” (as cited in Sandberg, 2014) — is one way to enact tactical submission (p. 60). Whether Sandberg knows it or not, her book is in close discourse with Judith Butler’s theory of gender constructivism. “If one ‘is’ a woman,” she asserts, “that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive” (Butler 2006, p. 354). The identity of ‘woman’ is nebulous, inconsistent, and incomplete. Interrogating it and drawing from it the components which are most beneficial is not entirely irrational.

In a less flattering comparison, Sandberg’s thinking also seems to echo exactly the problematic thinking Kimberle Crenshaw warns against when discussing disadvantaged identities, the pervasive “but for” rhetoric (Crenshaw 1989, p. 151). ‘If only this one trait did not exist, then this underprivileged person would be the same as everyone else!’ Crenshaw explains how identities are compartmentalized in this way so as to believe that one factor is all that prohibits equal treatment. Sandberg’s approach of selective adherence to feminine archetypes embodies this compartmentalization of identity to the letter. The learned submission of women is a trait distinguishable from the female identity, and *but for* this hindrance, they would be treated as equals in the corporate world. So to manipulate it as an individual component for benefit is quite logical from this standpoint.

Women should tactically submit to the systemic inequality of business because “getting rid of these internal barriers is critical to gaining power” (Sandberg 2014, p. 10). She sees that there is a societal problem at play, but asserts that playing the game by sexist rules will produce a less sexist business world if it gets women into leadership positions. In this game, believing that adherence to these sexist attitudes might be right or wrong is irrelevant, and one should only consider if adherence will advance or stifle their career. Here Butler would object, though, that “juridical power inevitably ‘produces’ what it claims merely to represent” (Butler 2006, p. 354). The greater society will continue to perpetuate stereotypes of female submission

which necessarily influence business operations and the climate in which they occur, regardless of the gender of CEOs. In brief: the business world does not exist in a vacuum. Our very language, according to theorists like Butler, is coded in terms of power hierarchies. One could easily despair that to try to uproot these embedded sexist apparatuses may not be possible from within the system.

Interestingly enough, though, this gloomy stance is not the one that Butler takes, and there is some evidence of support for the type of ‘battle’ which Sandberg intends to wage on the boys’ club in big business. Sandberg recognizes that it is somewhat of a “paradox” to try and “change the world by adhering to biased rules and expectations. I know it is not a perfect answer but a means to a desired end” (p. 61). Whether this tactic is in fact an effective means to an end is questionable, but the argument for subversion from within the system of power is given much positive consideration by Butler. “If the rules of governing signification not only restrict, but enable the assertion of alternative domains of cultural intelligibility ... then it is only *within* the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible” (Butler 2006, p. 359). Perhaps, then, there is viability to the tactical submission that Sandberg suggests. Slight subversions paired with placating concessions to stereotype might be a theoretically sound method to attempt to debilitate a sexist environment.

Tactical submission is not to be taken as inherently effective simply because it is theoretically consistent with other understandings of successful subversion. As one 2017 study by data scientists at Harvard (aptly enough, entitled: “A Study Used Sensors to Show That Men and Women Are Treated Differently at Work”) sought to prove, the difference in women’s treatment in the workplace might not even originate from any distinctly ‘female’ behaviors, but simply from the obstinate view that their male coworkers have of them as being different. “Women had the same number of contacts as men,” the study reported, “they spent as much time with senior leadership, and they allocated their time similarly to men in the same role. ...

Our analysis suggests that the difference in promotion rates between men and women in this company was due not to their behavior but to how they were treated” (Turban, Stephen, & Waber 2017, p. 3). And here we arrive at the potentially greatest flaw of the argument for tactical submission, so succinctly phrased: “Gender inequality is due to bias, not differences in behavior” (Turban, Stephen, & Waber 2017, p. 3).

Sexism is a belief system founded inherently upon the certainty that women are inferior to (or at the very least, different from) men. A woman seeking to ‘tactically submit’ to this idea will only affirm the difference, and to ‘tactically avoid’ femininity and behave more like a man when opportune will only perpetuate the notion that masculinity is inherently powerful. To Sandberg, and to many others inspired by *Lean In*, the appeal of believing that modifications in one’s own behavior can alter the systemically perpetuated impression of women is great, but the argument for Sandberg’s tactical submission simply does not address sexism’s illogical ideology. Much more research on the concept of tactical submission would be required to make any sort of claim as to its efficacy.

Further research is also recommended on the account of a possible connection between the concepts of ‘tactical submission’ and ‘ambivalent sexism,’ which was not within the scope of this paper to examine but which might provide evidence for the broader implications—and existence, for that matter—of a pattern identifiable as tactical submission. While no previous theoretical description of the behavior I term tactical submission has been found, it may be that this behavior is the specifically female-enacted facet of the larger concept of ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent sexism is the performance of actions or acceptance of attitudes that are based in sexist beliefs but which seem apparently to ‘benefit’ women, such as the common assertion that doors should be held for women, or that women should not be made to physically exert themselves for fear that they may be hurt. Tactical submission, as it has been here defined, might be considered the flip side of this coin, so to speak.

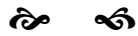
Ambivalent sexism is typically enacted by men to 'benefit' women, where tactical submission could be seen as women acting on or accepting sexist beliefs to 'benefit' themselves. Further exploration of this connection could yield promising results for future discussions of feminist theory, and help contextualize the mentality on which tactical submission is founded. It is unlikely, however, that this research will prove any strong defense of tactical submission as a valid method for subverting sexism, and it may prove the case that the strategy becomes even further invalidated and the cognitive dissonance, more overt even that it is now.

The above analysis of Sandberg's technique has perhaps given more credit than is due if it insinuates that she knowingly created this pattern, as she gives no indication of understanding these choices as anything but individual and compartmentalized struggles. It would be wrong to say, then, that she proposes this theory, but one might more accurately say she is a devoted practitioner and promoter of the skill. Great care has been taken to understand the motivations of this approach to sexist work environments, and even its viability in the eyes of established feminist theory has been allowed the chance to prove itself. Tactical submission fails, though, to address sexism as an ideology and not a reaction to feminine behavior, and therefore becomes largely inutile, not even to mention the harmful stereotypes it perpetuates and how it may in this way only feed into further prejudiced ideology. All examined, tactical submission is a fascinating behavioral pattern but hardly a likely candidate to end workplace sexism.

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STORIES TOLD IN MEDIA





IMPLICATIONS IN DEFINING TERRORISM

by Stephanie Downing

Terrorism is arguably the most sensationalized issue in the American newstream. From the Oklahoma City Bombing to the attacks on 9/11, terrorism dominates the mainstream media on both a national and international scale. As a result, our society has periodically attached certain terms, such as *terrorist*, *radicalized*, or *jibadi*, to demographic groups that are often featured in relation to terrorism—predominantly, Islamic-extremists (Calavita, 2010, p. 35). However, do the legal definitions of these terms align with this stereotype?

The critical race theory by Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado (2001) provides insight on why certain religious or ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be aligned with terrorism over other demographic groups. Because these terms are used so casually in our everyday vocabulary and the media, their legal connotations have been lost over time. A society that fails to acquire an accurate definition of terrorism is more threatening to their own security than these groups are.

The media strategically broadcasts terrorism in a manner that fuels the public's misunderstandings about the issue. Islamic-extremism is grossly overrepresented as the most threatening terrorist ideology, when there are thousands of transnational organizations that are just as deadly to global security. A content analysis of American

newspaper articles on terrorist attacks from 2003-2004 found that words that implied “destruction and devious intent” were used to describe the violence in Iraq, whereas “patriotism” and “allegiance” described the violence executed by the U.S. military against its enemies (Dunn et al., 2005, p. 67). In addition, violence perpetrated by U.S. forces was justified as “strategic” or “clandestine,” but not so when the same action is committed by a Middle Eastern nation. Therefore, the *actors* of violence evidently determine whether the attack is portrayed as terrorist attack or strategic operation by the media.

The public’s misunderstandings of terrorism have also caused grave implications in national and global security policy. *Terrorism* is defined quite differently amongst many government agencies in the United States. The Department of Defense (DoD), for instance, defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intend to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological” (Hoffman, 2017, p. 31). The term *unlawful violence* is essentially an oxymoron—is it truly possible for any act of violence to be lawful? This term could potentially justify the U.S. military’s decision to execute an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, which completely annihilated the cities in a manner that the world never saw before. One could argue that these attacks comply with the DoD’s definition of terrorism, as they pursued a political goal through violence to ultimately end the war. However, the DoD would likely counter and defend their actions as a strategic operation.

On the other hand, the State Department claims that terrorism is fueled by a political or subnational motive against non-combatants (Hoffman, year, p. 31). This definition is noteworthy because it considers attacks that target civilians as terrorist-inspired. Therefore, this definition would not consider the 2012 Benghazi attack as terror attack even though it was both politically and ideologically motivated (Dunn et al., 2005, p. 68).

At a United Nations Assembly in 1974, the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization attempted to counter both the DoD's and State Department's definitions of terrorism by claiming, "whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers, and the colonialists, cannot possibly be called 'terrorist'" (Dunn et al., 2005, p. 68, as cited by Hoffman, 1998, p. 26).

Today, the public's definitions of terrorism are rooted in discriminatory stereotypes against Arabs and Muslims. However, there are many sociological consequences when the legal definition of terrorism is obscured by the media and government agencies. Attaching the *terrorist* label immediately after a Muslim or Arab individual commits a crime unjustly profiles a demographic that is exceptionally large and diverse. Researchers have found that public perceptions are directly "shaped by subtle cues that draw on past experience [to periodically] alter one's subsequent judgements, evaluations, and actions" (Dunn, Moore, & Nosek, 2005, p. 67). When an entire group is marginalized in society, they become consistent targets of prejudice and remain isolated from their community.

Defining terrorism accurately is critical for our society to recognize factors that define a terrorist attack over some other type of crime. Today, simply wearing a hijab or "looking Muslim" is often sufficient to identify someone as a terror suspect (Breen-Smyth, 2013, p. 232). When terrorism is loosely defined, the public will not be able to separate religion and ethnicity from the action committed. Differences in reporting terrorism in the media based on the nationality of the perpetrator only adds to the growing societal issues that develop from these misconceptions, and over time, endangers global security.

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MASSACHUSETTS' SCHOOL LIBRARIAN REJECTS FIRST
LADY DONATION OF DR. SEUSS BOOKS DUE TO
"RACIST PROPAGANDA"

by Alexandra Holmes

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 13, 2017

First Lady and former model Melania Trump donated Dr. Seuss books to a school in Cambridge, Massachusetts in honor of National Read a Book Day, which was September 6th. The school's librarian rejected the donation of books and published a statement that Dr. Seuss's illustrations are "steeped in racist propaganda, caricatures, and harmful stereotypes." Mrs. Trump sent out collections of 10 Dr. Seuss books to one school in each state, including the classic "Cat in the Hat".

Cambridgeport Elementary School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, also being home to Ivy-League School, Harvard University, was one of the schools selected. Liz Phipps Soeiro, the school's librarian, who has a graduate degree in library science, rejected The First Lady's book donation and wrote an editorial piece on Horn Book's Family Reading blog explaining why.

Before this, Mrs. Trump has publically stated her passion for children's education saying "Getting an

education is perhaps the most important and wondrous opportunity of...young lives.” She and The White House said they worked “with the Department of Education to identify schools...that have achieved high standards of excellence.”

Soeiro wrote in her response that the school did not need the books, saying: “My students have access to a school library with over nine thousand volumes and a librarian with a graduate degree in library science.” She also followed up her reasoning with her issue of the content and selection of the books themselves.

“Another fact that many people are unaware of is that Dr. Seuss’s illustrations are steeped in racist propaganda, caricatures, and harmful stereotypes,” wrote Soeiro. “You may not be aware of this, but Dr. Seuss is a bit of a cliché, a tired and worn ambassador for children’s literature.”

Soeiro even provided a *School Library Journal* article written by Grace Hwang Lynch “Is The Cat in the Hat Racist? Read Across America Shifts Away From Dr. Seuss and Toward Diverse Books.” The article covers Dr. Seuss’s career background before becoming the beloved author renowned to us all. During World War II, Dr. Seuss made political cartoons “featuring slurs and racist drawings of Japanese Americans, portraying them as a danger to nation,” wrote Lynch.

The article then turns to attack The Cat in the Hat, Seuss’s perhaps most famous character. Katie Ishizuka has analyzed Seuss’s books for years, and she, with her husband, founded the Conscious Kid Social Justice Library, a subscription service which sends monthly shipments of books featuring multicultural characters to subscribers.

“The Cat’s physical appearance, including the Cat’s oversized top hat, floppy bow tie, white gloves, and frequently open mouth, mirrors actual blackface performers; as does the role he plays as ‘entertainer’ to the white family—in whose house he doesn’t belong,” says Ishizuka.

Soeiro ends her statement to Mrs. Trump graciously, writing she is “honored” her students were

recognized and “it was a wonderful gesture, if one that could have been better thought out.” The librarian even attaches a list of her own book suggestions, writing she hopes “(the books) will offer you a window into the lives of the many children affected by the policies of your husband’s administration.”

Cambridge Public Schools not long after issued a statement, saying they support their employees’ ability to state their opinions, but the blog Soeiro published does not reflect any official stance for the school itself. “While we enthusiastically support the political engagement and passion of our employees...our school district did not authorize any such statement,” the district said.



SNAPCHAT AND “SUITS” UNDER THE CRITICAL PROCESS

by Sarah Madanat

People are now using, and relating to social media and TV programs more than ever due to the development of media dimensions over the years. Through the five-step critical process (describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and engaging), the roles, effects, and outcomes of Snapchat and a TV show called “Suits” on society can be examined, allowing users and society to better understand the social media platforms they engage with on a daily basis.

Snapchat

Snapchat, a mass social media platform created by former students at Stanford University a couple of years ago, is now one of the most engaging platforms in the world. The platform could be referred to as a narrative (since it is a story-telling business constantly connecting people to understand each other’s context). It is an application with a yellow logo and a white ghost trapped inside of it. The application is now allowing people all over the world to communicate through pictures. It is used for smartphones only, and its main purpose is that it allows the users to send each other snapshots that last up to ten seconds only. A person can choose to upload a “story,”

either a picture, a video, or a GIF to their profile, and it only lasts 24 hours after the time it is uploaded.

Through yearly developments, Snapchat now consists of many new characteristics. To begin with, Snapchat now has a feature called “The Snap Map”, where users have the option of sharing their location. In addition, users have options to send pictures for an unlimited number of seconds to their receivers. People can also upload images or videos from their camera roll onto their story. Snapchat uses funny emojis with face recognition to the pictures they share. The photo library has access to user’s camera roll which saves the Snapchats. Moreover, many other media platforms have joined Snapchat to display their content and advertise.

So why is Snapchat such an important media platform? As globalization and competition are increasing between different businesses, Snapchat still manages to be an important media platform where collaborations and improvements are regularly taking place. Snapchat is evolving into a place where different businesses and newspapers/magazines display ads and content. Webzines, magazines that appear exclusively online, such as Cosmopolitan magazines, are displayed on Snapchat, as are media outlets such as CNN, Daily Mail, Vice, Taste made, MTV, Vogue, People, and National Geographic. Since the application turned from being a simple social media application to one that is now connecting many media outlets together at once, it is positively changing the way business is conducted today. Magazines and news industries are changing and growing rapidly, especially since their content is being distributed to different social media platforms, requiring them to come up with more interesting topics and related articles. In this case, convergence is taking place.

Another application which is commonly used in Snapchat is “Bitmoji”. It is an application that allows Snapchat users to create an emoji with similar features to their faces, to represent themselves through Snapchat to their friends. Many enjoy using Snapchat because of all of all the different entertainments that are offered through it.

For example, if one wanted to read an interesting article and then directly view what their friends are up to, it would be the ideal application.

People of all ages are now exposed to content available exclusively through Snapchat, thus creating a positive impact on society. When the user opens the application, they can view the stories that their friends have posted, and the articles featured right below in colorful and attractive colors. The article titles featured are usually captivating, and induce the receivers to open them to have an idea of what the content is about. That being said, everyone is bound to open the articles whether the topics interest them or not. The positive impact of this is that the young people who don't usually watch news directly view recent news happening around the world through CNN, The Economist, The New Yorker, and other news outlets. They also have access to sport news, and other fun topics to look at through National Geographic, Road Tracker (a page featuring different cars and their features) etc.

In addition to that, individuals are now using this application to express their opinions on their stories about social, personal, political, and business-related matters. For example, many individuals or social influencers choose to include brand reviews as a certain component of their 24-hour stories. This can affect many businesses both positively and negatively because people are most likely to trust what they see on Snapchat, since they are most likely to believe something that is directly recorded by the blogger. It also affects societies and the culture of the world since globalization is increasing with improved communication and connection between people in different parts of the world, always sharing their experiences.

All this exposure is positive and educates many people about different matters, so what other effects does Snapchat have on society? While it has many positive effects apart from the major media convergences it created, it also has negative outcomes. Privacy is no longer present in our culture today since millions of people are regularly sharing details about their lives, whether it be on Snapchat stories or other social media platforms. The constant

sharing of pictures and locations on “Snap Map” leads to extreme exposure as well. Moreover, its content is not particularly designed for those receivers of a wide range of age groups. The material that comes along with all those media outlets included in the application is of low culture, meaning it relates directly to popular culture, celebrity-gossip stories and other related news circulated by the mass media. Some of its content could be designed for women only, or adults only. This is where people may have different standpoints on whether Snapchat should be used by and be available to people of all ages.

Furthermore, keeping in mind most kids own either an iPhone or another type of smartphone, they have easy access the content Snapchat has to offer. Parents might want to provide freedom to their children and allow them to own an iPhone and communicate with friends, yet are not satisfied with the fact that their children have exposure to such low culture content. For example, *Cosmopolitan* is a famous women magazine and is one of the main magazines featured in Snapchat. Its content is designed for women of certain ages, with articles titles such as “what his body language is trying to tell you”, or other related topics that could be sexual. Interested young teenagers are using the application, and are bound to read those articles out of curiosity. This aspect of Snapchat can increase the explicit content the underage is viewing. On the other hand, other receivers of appropriate ages find it attention-grabbing, and are staying up to date with articles, exploring new and different topics frequently.

So, what can the solution to this be? A reasonable suggestion that could be taken into consideration by the Snapchat team, is allowing people under 16 years of age to use their app, but have their content controlled according to their birth date input. Having the users of this application be unaware of this technique in controlling their content, the underage users will not be aware that they are “missing out.” Moreover, it will not encourage them to insert fake birth dates, just like people did in the past when Facebook restricted people under a certain age from creating profiles. Another solution which may negatively impact the

magazine Cosmopolitan or Snapchat is by reducing the sex-related content they create. If Snapchat takes the initiative to present this content control issue to Cosmopolitan and other companies, they may amend the articles they propose to Snapchat. The negative way it can possibly impact them is if they simply resign, strongly believing their explicit content is not worth removing. The issues of privacy control and content control can be found in many media outlets, although they may have impressive and positive influences on society. For example, many TV shows can have inappropriate content depending on who is watching it, but have a larger message being delivered to the audience with a positive impact intended for society and culture overall. Moreover, the way in which content is published and distributed differs between each media outlet.

Suits

Suits, a chapter show that premiered in 2011, consists of seven seasons so far. It revolves around the story of a lawyer (Harvey Spector) in need of an associate for a law firm that only hires Harvard Law graduates. He ends up hiring Mike Ross, a college drop-out, to work for him. Even though Mike never went to Harvard Law School and this is a fraud, Spector finds his intelligence the key to his firm's success. Throughout the series, different issues arise related to law suits, Mike's career risks, and what the firm can do to deal with those problems. Along with those issues, each character's personal troubles are highlighted, especially through the two main characters: Mike Ross and his boss Harvey Spector. This TV show also does a great job of expressing the law/business work setting realistically, and the competition that comes along with being a corporate lawyer in a firm.

Suits is a popular show and is available through various media outlets today as media convergence is constantly taking place. It is now available on third and fourth screen, meaning viewers can now watch programs on their smaller screens, instead of making the effort to wait for the next episode on TV, or go to the theatre. Cable TV giants such as HBO and others have made TV shows and

programs available through download for those who want to subscribe through video subscription services. On Netflix (an online entertainment company), many movies and TV shows are found, including *Suits*. Since there are so many ways in which one can watch TV shows today, people have access to both legal and illegal sites. Since some episodes of *Suits* aren't up to date on Netflix, some fans prefer to watch them illegally on random websites, regardless of the fact that it is a violation in most countries. This is because the characters and everyone else who was part of creating this show should be—and deserve to be—paid and credited for what they have created. Using those websites allows a large number of people to watch whatever they want to and whenever they like to, possibly leading to large losses in the industry. As content and photography of shows are constantly improving, people are more likely to be interested in keeping up or watching new programs available through different screens.

Although *Suits* is focused on an interesting story, it is also used to advertise certain brands, schools, and areas. For example, its shooting location in New York allows fans watching from different countries to get an idea of what life in New York is really about, especially from a lawyer's perspective. Additionally, since Harvey is a wealthy lawyer in the show, he is always riding in high-end cars such as Audi. The scenes in which this is shown are really noticeable. If a fan of cars was watching this, he might want to purchase this car. Certain handbag brands are also advertised through the outfits that the female characters wear, and the list goes on. While many simply view entertainment shows as solely for entertainment, much more usually is associated with them.

Since this TV show is an entertainment series, it includes back stories that can educate the viewers. Minor alterations can be made in order to make it more educational for the audience. One way this could be done is incorporating significant educational material about law for instance. It could also be done by visualizing realistic life lessons through heavily emphasizing the negative consequences of Mike's actions, and the weight that he had

on the characters in his life. This would be a better approach than to give an impression that whatever immoral decisions he took, he got away with. At the end of the day, everyone is aware that most of what we learn today comes from media and popular culture. If certain things like fraud aren't presented in the right way to the audience, wouldn't that teach the young generations that it sometimes may be possible to get away with misconduct?

A large percentage of what people learn comes from the media and the programs that they watch. Suits, as mentioned above, addresses many issues one is likely to confront in reality whether it is personal problems, or those found in work environments. It also includes details about sexual relationships between the characters. Although some may argue it is of low culture, it could also be interpreted as having content of high culture as well. For instance, Harvard Law School, a university of high culture, is mentioned and given importance and attention. If Mike attended law school, he would have found a decent job in a high-end firm. On the other hand, it is interesting to see how his talent managed to get a job in a respectable firm even though he went to jail. This situation also proves the corruption that takes place in our society from individuals who have the power to do as they please, regardless of the laws and consequences. One can learn a lot from programs if they pay attention to the larger idea being presented.

Conclusion

Over the years, media has become a way for people to express their thoughts opinions, and perceptions on different topics. It is important that communicators, social influencers, publishers etc. target the intended audience yet make their material appropriate for a wide range of ages depending on what it is about. This is important especially because a large age range is active on the media, and most content is available to them in one way or another. Technology today is our key source of information and outlook on the world. TV shows and Social media particularly are playing the biggest roles in

important aspects, ranging from business to politics, culture, etc.

In conclusion, through analyzing and interpreting certain publications depicted on media, both Snapchat and Suits have different outcomes on a large audience. The younger generations are getting caught up with technology and media in various forms intensely today. For that reason, controlling what is published is more important than ever. Considering different aspects of what is published and exposed in the media is important to guarantee an insightful future generation, built on high culture and appropriate knowledge.

AUTHOR AND EDITOR BIOGRAPHIES



Njoud Alkharji is a current Art student. Her major is Art in Fine Arts with minor in Ceramics. Her artwork and ceramics has been shown in several exhibitions. She interns as a gallery assistant in Torpedo Factory Art Center at Target Gallery, where she was involved in events and art exhibitions. After graduation in summer 2018, she plans to start her own business that incorporates art and ceramic. Her hobbies include shopping, discovering new businesses, and cafes. Njoud enjoys spending time with her family and friends. .

Lujain Alsulaimani is an English major.

Claire Barnum is a Business Administration major with a focus in Finance. Graduating in May 2018, she aspires to work as a financial analyst or manager and hopes to move to London within the next 5-10 years after studying abroad in the spring of 2017. Her hobbies include reading, working out, yoga, eating a vegan diet, spending time with her friends, and visiting her family and dog, Finn, in New Jersey.

Theresa Buscemi is a sophomore Math and Theology/Religious Studies double major with an Education minor. After graduation in 2020, she plans to pursue a doctorate degree in Mathematics and teach at the college level. She is currently a captain of the women's volleyball team at Marymount University, and participates in the music ministry of Marymount Campus Ministry. Her favorite activities include playing volleyball, playing guitar, and spending time with family and friends.

Stephanie Downing is a Criminal Justice major with a research focus on terrorism analysis. She hopes to pursue a career in national security and/or the Foreign Service. Stephanie is from the island of O'ahu in Hawaii and enjoys hiking, Tahitian dance, and traveling around the world.

Micaela Healy is a Politics major with minors in French and Gender & Society.

Alexandra Holmes is a junior majoring in Communication with a minor in Fashion Merchandising. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in media production and journalism. Alexandra is from a small town in West Virginia and whenever she has free time she loves to go back and visit her family, the farm with all the animals, and her nieces, Hannah and Madison. Her favorite books are *Gone with the Wind* and *The Book Thief*.

Alex Kober is an Interior Design major with a minor in Art History. He has a passion for design and is intrigued by the ways in which people form relationships with their homes and personal objects. He hopes to one day own a small-business design firm specializing in residential and hospitality. Alex enjoys reading, going to art museums, shopping, and spending time with friends and family.

Rebecca (Becky) Lake is a sophomore Media Design major with an emphasis in Graphic Design and minoring in History and Illustration. Becky is very involved around campus as the Vice President of the Finance Club, the

Graphic Designer for the Student Government Association, and Designer for the *BlueInk*. When she graduates, Becky hopes to continue to design and create (with maybe a dash of history in there somewhere).

Noelle Larino is a Communication Major with a Minor in Public History. After graduating in 2020, Noelle plans to work in public programming for museums in the D.C. area. Her interests include reading, writing articles for Marymount's school newspaper, *The Banner*, and visiting local museums and historical sites around the country.

Diana (Betsy) Lizotte is a senior Writing major and French minor. She will attend American University's Master of Fine Arts program in Fiction starting in the fall. Betsy is a retired Army veteran, mother of two young adults, and the spouse of an Army colonel. Her hobbies are SCUBA diving and snorkeling, walking in the woods, reading, and watching comedies, most of which she prefers to do with her family and three miniature dachshunds.

Sarah Madanat is a sophomore at Marymount University pursuing a degree in Communications with a minor in Fashion Merchandising. Her strong passion for communicating with different people and interest in Fashion are what lead her to choose those areas of study. She is currently a work scholar for the School of Education and Human Services as a Social Media Marketer and Research Assistant.

Callahan Pels is a sophomore at Marymount University majoring in Biology and minoring in Writing.

John Renkiewicz is an English major graduating in May 2018. He hopes to continue his education to eventually teach English in a community college setting. John is a non-traditional student having served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1974 through 1987 returning to service after the 9/11 tragedy to serve in the U.S. Army from 2003 through 2012 when he retired with 22 years active service. His interests

include working in service-orientated positions, watching old episodes of “Law and Order”, reading current best sellers and histories of the World Wars, biking with his wife Cathy and friends, and eating Oreos.

Bianca Thompson is a senior Fashion Merchandising major with a minor in Psychology. She is constantly surrounded by books, working both at the Marymount Reinsch Library and Barnes & Noble. Upon graduating, she hopes to attain a career in styling or fashion journalism. She enjoys writing, putting together outfits for her friends, watching movies of all genres, exploring different restaurants in the DMV, and contributing to her ever growing shoe collection.

Julia Torrico is a double major in Information Technology with a specialty in Cybersecurity & Networking, and English with a focus in Literature & Languages, and Philosophy minor. She spends her free time reading, playing video games, watching movies and TV shows, writing for fun, and finding time to be with her family and friends.

Johnny Vaccaro is a senior English major with a focus in literature. After graduating, he will pursue a Master’s in education at Queens College. Johnny enjoys outdoor activities such as snowboarding, mountain biking, and hiking.

