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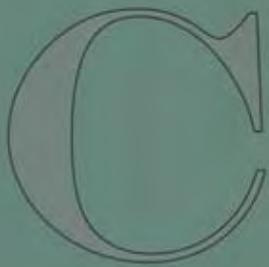
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Una Voce  
2008



a magazine of Tacoma Community College



# Una Voce

Issue 8 -- 2008

Tacoma Community College

*Una Voce* is back for its eighth year of publication. It was a privilege to read a sampling of what Tacoma Community College students had to say this year on topics such as the horrendous treatment of Mexican farmworkers, the moral philosophy of C.S. Lewis, drug use among nurses, corporate manipulation of our self-images, and personal reflections on the nightmare of methamphetamine use. We want to thank all of the students who submitted their work. Choosing 20 pieces from the more than 50 that we received was, to say the least, difficult. We hope those of you whose papers were not selected this year continue to write with passion, intelligence and clarity.

All TCC students are invited to submit papers written for any TCC class to be considered for publication in *Una Voce*. The submission deadline comes during spring quarter. Questions can be directed to Mary Fox at [mfox@tacomacc.edu](mailto:mfox@tacomacc.edu) or Dr. Scott Earle at [searle@tacomacc.edu](mailto:searle@tacomacc.edu).

Thank you to everyone who helped make this issue happen, especially Sakura Moses in marketing and communication, Andy Duckworth in eLearning, instructor Anthony Culanag and his graphic arts students, Dr. Scott Earle, who conceived of *Una Voce* eight years ago, and all of the TCC instructors who spend time working with student writers. Thanks also to the Associated Students of Tacoma Community College for funding the magazine.

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# The Conscience of Man: The Moral Philosophical Doctrine of C.S. Lewis

*Alex Newman*

*Written for Professor Li's Philosophy 101*

Alex's interests at TCC are among the interdisciplinary arts and sciences. She is interested in political science and communications. Her ideal career would be in broadcasting or journalism. Alex's greatest challenge when writing every paper is the beginning. Her advice to other writers: "Try to find something that you are passionate about—then dig into it deeper."

## Introduction to C.S. Lewis's Philosophy

The first question that may arise when considering C.S. Lewis's writings surround whether or not he is a philosopher, or simply an apologist or theologian. If we saw him solely as one, his expression of thought could not be taken without certain warrants. Many point out that in his career, Lewis rescinded himself from that noble faction called the "Philosophers" in his failure to seek the counsel of those considered in that order. Closer examination proves that, if taken in the literal sense, the idea sways to the contrary. The word "philosophy" is derived from the ancient Greek terms "phileo" (love) and "sophia" (wisdom). A philosopher is, essentially, merely someone who loves wisdom – no more and no less. They may not be particularly wise themselves, or perhaps they may be but deny it in expression of Socratic humility, but, in any case, they are still philosophers because they express a clear and passionate love of wisdom. C.S. Lewis, beginning his career as a scholar and atheist, later ending it as a renowned writer and apologist, was a lover of wisdom.

If there is any other qualification for the rank of philosopher, I do not pretend to know it. Thus, C.S. Lewis was a philosopher. His philosophical muse is one begat through rationalist logic, influenced greatly by his search for truth and his confrontations with, and ultimate acceptance of, faith. A true rationalist, adverse to the Empiricism that was, at the time, increasing in its popularity, Lewis believed that all things could be decided through logic and reason. In this light, we will take a closer look into the moral philosophy of Lewis and those great thinkers who influenced him – Augustine, Plotinus, etc. Topics include: the existence of morality and the absolute, the solution to the problem of evil, a word refuting naturalism, the probability of Christianity, the influences of Lewis's philosophy, Lewis's philosophy in comparison with other moral thinkers, and how all of this relates to our time (meaning the social and philosophical implications of Lewis's teachings).

## The Conscience: Evidence for Morality and the Absolute

Lewis spent the greater part of his academic and literary career writing philosophical dialogs in order to prove, rationally, the existence of a common morality, the divine, and the absolute. The key to his doctrine lies within man, within the simplest and most familiar of known substances: the Conscience

of Man. In his book, *Mere Christianity*, Lewis writes of this Conscience, "... human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it.

Secondly, they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in." (*Mere Christianity*) Now, Lewis expounds that this is not the law of nature as we see it in the modern sense, as the law of gravity or of entropy, but the law of nature in the old thinking, what Lewis describes as "The Law of Human Nature." Unlike the other laws of nature, this is a law that man can choose to violate, and, when he does, as with physical laws, there will be certain results. This is similar to the premise that if a man walks off a building, the result is that the law of gravity comes into play, and he will fall, be injured, perhaps die. Likewise, the violation of the Law of Human Nature bears certain consequences.

There are those who protest that the Conscience is not a valid evidence for Lewis's argument of a common morality—that the Conscience is merely the "herd instinct" that we human beings have developed over the ages for the sake of survival. However, others have made the distinction between the common morality and the simple "herd instinct." Will Vaus, in his work *Mere Theology* illustrates thus, "Suppose you see ... someone who is drowning ... Your first instinct may be to help the person who is ... drowning because ... that person is a human being just like you, and that's what you would want if the situation were reversed. That is your herd instinct coming into play. In the next second, however, you will be thinking that you don't want to get involved because you don't want to get hurt. That is your instinct of self-preservation. Our instincts are often in conflict with one another, and over and above our instincts we often hear another voice, the voice of conscience, telling us what we should do" (Vaus). The instinct for self-preservation can be overwhelmingly strong. Contrarily, it is very often that the Conscience tells us to obey the weaker of our instincts, refuting the theory that the Moral Standard is simply the "herd instinct" in human beings. The Moral Standard prevails despite—or perhaps, because of—our instincts; it is not an instinct in itself, but a true Law of Nature.

### **Refutation of Philosophical Dualism and Balance**

Lewis used his extensive capacity for reason in his arguments refuting the ideals of Dualism (the idea that the cosmos is controlled by one ultimate good being and one ultimate bad being, neither one more powerful than the other, in an eternal struggle of which the earth is a center point). In the first chapter of *Mere Christianity*, Lewis writes,

"If Dualism is true, then the bad Power must be a being who likes badness for its own sake. But in reality we have no experience of anyone liking badness just because it is bad. The nearest we can get to it is cruelty. But in real life people are cruel because they have a sexual perversion, which makes cruelty cause a sensual pleasure in them, or else for the sake of something they are going to get out of it—money, or power, or safety. But pleasure, money, power, and safety are all, as far as they go, good things. The badness consists in pursuing them by the wrong method, or in the wrong way, or too much...wickedness, when you examine it, turns out to be the pursuit of some good in the wrong way. You can be good for the mere sake of goodness, you cannot be bad for the mere sake of badness"

(*Mere Christianity*). Writes Ph.D. and author of *C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea*, Victor Reppert, regarding this doctrine, "... this is not only an argument against dualism, but also against the doctrine of the cosmic sadist [God as an evil power who derives pleasure in causing humanity pain]. The idea that the creator of the universe might be evil is not plausible since evil cannot exist on its own, but is always a perversion of good."

### **The Human Will: The Solution to the Problem of Evil**

Armand Nicholi wrote, in his book *The Question of God* (a comparative analysis of C.S. Lewis versus Sigmund Freud) that, "To live life is to suffer pain... Pain is an intrinsic part of our existence." As long as mankind has pondered his existence, or the existence of a divine creator, one question has always arisen in protest to the idea – essentially, the problem of evil. If there is a God, why does the world suffer from war, disease, sorrow, and death? Lewis describes the problem thus, "If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures happy, and if God were Almighty He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore, God lacks either goodness, or power, or both. This is the problem of pain, in its simplest form." In the earlier part of his philosophy, Lewis established that the idea of God being evil, or a cosmic Sadist, was not plausible because, "Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good before it is spoiled" (*Mere Christianity*). So, if God is, until further established, a good entity, then why the problem of pain? Lewis writes, "... if God is wiser than we His judgment must differ from ours on many things, and not least on good and evil. What seems to us good may therefore not be good in his eyes, and what seems to us evil may not be evil" (*The Problem of Pain*). On close examination of the premise, the conclusion appears self-evident, but, for many, it is a necessary clarification of God's judgment. If God is good, then we have no right to question His judgment – He must be right.

This conclusion may be enough for some people, but not most. Lewis recognized this, and acceptably fleshed out the solution to the problem of evil in the chapter of *The Problem of Pain* entitled, "The Fall of Man," as follows, "The Christian answer to the question proposed in the last chapter is contained in the doctrine of the Fall. According to that doctrine, man is now a horror to God and to himself and a creature ill-adapted to the universe not because God made him so but because he has made himself so by the abuse of free will" (*The Problem of Pain*). This free will, like the conscience, is a key point of Lewis's philosophy, and the one solution to the problem of pain. But, critics object, if God knew that man could make the decision to disobey and thus taint all humanity through his sin, why would God take such a risk in giving us free will? Lewis puts it this way: If humanity were made up of automatons, designed and programmed to obey God, there would be no merit in our existence. The merit begins, Lewis believes, where God left off—at the moment He gave His people the gift of choice. "God created things which had free will—and free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or joy worth having" (*The Problem of Pain*).

Unfortunately, man decided to use this free will to disobey The Law of Nature, The Conscience, The Moral Standard; then came the Fall, the exile from Eden—thus, the world, through it's own choosing, has been and will continue to be afflicted with the problem of evil, what Lewis called, the Problem of Pain.

### **The Argument of Reason: Refutation of Naturalism and Materialism**

There is one blemish on the philosophical career of C.S. Lewis, one that tarnished people's opinion of his arguments – this is the Anscombe affair. Lewis believed materialism (and naturalism, likewise) to be self-refuting. “One of the first philosophical arguments I ever encountered was C.S. Lewis's argument ... that naturalism is self-refuting because it is inconsistent with the validity in reasoning” (Reppert). Lewis submitted his supposed refutation of materialism (and, simultaneously, naturalism) to a group of philosophers called The Socratic Society, and his formula was criticized by one Elizabeth Anscombe. Lewis recognized her as correct and was made to re-evaluate his whole sequence of reason; with time, he was able to overcome Anscombe's proposed difficulty, inserting the changed “Argument from Reason” in a later edition of his book *Miracles*. Unfortunately, the confrontation between Lewis and Anscombe has grown into something by which most philosophers use to dismiss Lewis altogether, very few recognizing that Anscombe, herself, spoke very highly of Lewis's revised argument. (Vaus). A brief summary of Lewis's reasoning is expressed very well in the following sentence: “If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of the atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true ... and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms” (*Miracles*). In a philosophical chapter on the argument from reason, C.S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea, Victor Reppert broke down Lewis's revised train of thought and expressed it in the following sequence: “1. No thought is valid if it can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes. 2. If materialism is true, then all thoughts can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes. 3. Therefore, if materialism is true, then no thought is valid. 4. If no thought is valid, then the thought “materialism is true” is not valid. 5. A thesis whose truth entails the invalidity of the thought that is true ought to be rejected, and its denial ought to be accepted. 6. Therefore, materialism ought to be rejected, and its denial ought to be accepted” (Reppert).

“When Lewis talks about the validity of reason, he is talking about something broader than deductive validity ... Perhaps it might be better to substitute something more familiar in the theory of knowledge, the idea that of a justified belief ...” Reppert continues with this idea in a version of Lewis's train of thought, “1. No belief is justified if it can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes. 2. If materialism is true, then all beliefs can be explained as the result of irrational causes. 3. Therefore, if materialism is true, then no belief is justified. 5. If materialism is true, then the belief “materialism is true” is not justified. 6. Therefore, materialism should be rejected,” (Reppert).

### **The Christ: An Christological Sustenance for the Probability of Christianity**

While the Conscience of Man was a revolutionary idea for Lewis's personal philosophy, it led him to the acceptance of theism only. The ideals of Christianity (God incarnate dying and resurrecting for the sins of humanity), he had yet to accept (*Surprised by Joy*). Upon deeper analysis, however, it became clear to him that Christ's divinity was the only logical route to take.

“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil ... Either this man was, and is, The Son of God: or else a madman or something

worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us” (Lewis). However, this trilemma can only be accepted if one agrees on the certain warrants it implies. In order to accept Lewis’s trilemma, we must first accept the premises and the following assumptions: 1) Jesus’s claims in the Scripture are best interpreted not merely as claims to be the Jew’s Messiah but claims to be God. 2) The Gospels are a reliable historical record of what Jesus said and did. 3) No sane person can form the false belief that he himself is God. [And] 4) The claim “Jesus is God” is more antecedently probable than the admittedly improbable claim that Jesus was a great moral teacher and either a liar or a madman...rather than debating these assumptions, apologists have simply repeated the mantra ‘liar, lunatic or Lord,’ while opponents have cried in response ‘false dilemma.’ Neither of these responses, in my estimation, does justice to the complex issues the trilemma raises (Reppert). Lewis himself recognized these warrants, and spent several pages of his book *Miracles* in arguing the truth in them. However, to delve into his extensive reasoning in support of these warrants cannot be adequately addressed within the limited pages of this research paper without delaying the communication of Lewis’s holistic philosophy. Nevertheless, the reasoning is well worth further exploration for those intrigued with this specific facet of Lewis’s philosophy.

### **Influences of Lewis’s Philosophy**

From a young age and throughout his life, Lewis was a devourer of knowledge. By nature an earnest scholar, he read continuously and critically. In reading, he discovered that his brand of hard-nosed atheism was becoming harder and harder to defend by pure logic and reason alone. His influences were many – the most prominent, many may recognize: G.K. Chesterton, St. Augustine, Plotinus, Thomas More, Evelyn Underhill, Richard Baxter, George McDonald, and Thomas Aquinas, among others. He was also significantly familiar with the teachings of Kant, even so much as to address some of Kant’s beliefs in his book *The Problem of Pain*. His beliefs in comparison to Kant’s continue below.

### **The Moral Philosophy in Comparison with Other Prominent Moral Thinkers**

Lewis did not believe in the simplistic solution to philosophical debate by falling back solely on fideism. He believed in strong rationalism, and part of his philosophy rested in the idea that the existence of divinity could be proven by rationalist analysis and logic alone, with his primary evidences identified, as follows, “The Argument from Longing,” “The Argument from Conscience,” and “The Argument from Reason” (Vaus). Lewis’s beliefs greatly contrast that of other moral thinkers, but, in this paper, we will focus on the comparison between Lewis and the renowned and revered modern empiricist philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Kant was one who thought outside of the norm, who challenged the status quo. He is often credited with revolutionizing modern epistemology, (the study of how we, humanity, know what we know) when he asked the famous question, “Can we really know anything at all?” Though Kant was a man of faith, he had certain warrants regarding this subject – his philosophy with regard to faith was simply that faith cannot be argued, and that morality is something that can be understood only under fideism. He took faith in an all-or-nothing stance, that it was impossible to prove on either an

intellectual or a philosophical level. Lewis thought differently.

Their opinions on the nature of moral obedience differed significantly, as well. Lewis believed that man ought to reap joy from the complete serving of God under the Moral Law ... Kant believed that an action was only particularly moral if a man went out of his way and comfort to do it. In the words of Lewis (2001), “Kant thought that no action had moral value unless it were done out of pure reverence for the moral law, that is, without inclination, and he has been accused of a ‘morbid frame of mind’ which measures the value of the act by its unpleasantness. All popular opinion is, indeed, on Kant’s side. The people never admire a man for doing something he likes: the very words ‘But he likes it’ imply the corollary ‘And therefore it has no merit’. Yet against Kant stands the obvious truth, noted by Aristotle, that the more virtuous a man becomes the more he enjoys virtuous actions.”

### **How This Relates to Our Time**

The arguments against Lewis’s philosophy of the Conscience of Man have been numerous and substantial in their nature. One of the greatest arguments is that of the Historical and Cultural Relativists. They claim that the accepted social and cultural stances on morality have shifted through the years and among certain groups. Taking cues from G.K. Chesterton’s *Everlasting Man*, Lewis writes, as a rebuttal, that this is not necessarily the case. “I know that some people say the idea of a Law of Nature or decent behavior known to men is unsound, because different civilizations and different ages have had quite different moralities. But this is not true. There have been differences...but these have never amounted to anything like a total difference ... think what a totally different morality would mean. Think of a country where people were admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud of double-crossing all the people who had been kindest to him. You might just as well try to imagine a country where two and two make five.”

A completely different morality could have only one result: the abolition of mankind. Lewis dealt with this concept in the third chapter of his space trilogy, *That Hideous Strength*, and a later apologetic work, *The Abolition of Man*, in which he put forth further evidences in favor of a common moral conscience existent in humankind. Every race that has endeavored to follow a “new morality” or “different morality” has only come to grips with its own destruction. Such foolish pursuit of elasticizing “good and evil” are evident throughout all areas of history and all ended in similar fashion: Sodom and Gomorrah, Maya and Aztec, Babylon, Rome, and, more recently, Germany. Lewis, himself, while in the trenches of World War I, saw the results of ignoring the Law of Nature. Indeed, there have been differences in individual groups’ perception of the Moral Standard, whether based in religion, culture, or the time in history, but these have been only deviations. The Conscience is still there, Lewis asserts, it has never been absent—there have simply been cases where people, whole myriads, have ignored the Conscience’s cry.

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## We Have a Dream... The American Dream

*Alex Newman*

When asked if poor black people should “pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” Martin Luther King, Jr. replied that to do that, they needed a pair of boots. King was not referring to equality of outcome, but equality of opportunity. He believed that, if black people were simply given “boots” (that is, economic, educational, and social opportunity), they would, indeed, pick themselves up. At this period in history, most black people were being denied these fundamental elements of the “American dream.”

The USA is the most prosperous and equal country in all the world, but it was not always like this, and it still has large space for improvement. Nevertheless, if ever there was a place where equality of opportunity was most revered and practiced, America is its embodiment. Inequality of opportunity has been gradually routed out from our society — that is not to say it is non-existent, for no society is ideal, but America is the model of equal opportunity in our modern world. The government provides public education (schools and libraries) for its citizens, the Constitution prohibits government discrimination against race, religion, gender, and other defining characteristics, our economy and social class systems are among the most successful and penetrable institutions in the world, and, should a person be beset by financial troubles, the government has provided them with many social and economic safety nets — welfare, Social Security, etc.

This is not even mentioning such private institutions that contribute to society and provide aid, like Boys and Girls’ clubs, church missions, AA groups, the YMCA and YWCA, homeless shelters, and others. Finally, anyone can be an American citizen. Anyone can immigrate to this country and reap the benefits of hard work. This is not true of most modern countries — for example, one must be born in France to be considered French or born in Germany to be considered German. America presents a great opportunity to anyone who will work hard for it. In America, few barriers are insurmountable — in this society, we see success stories from all walks of life, despite race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation. The story of Chris Gardner, a black man who, through relentless determination to take care of his son, went from homelessness to a successful businessman has been told in his autobiography and a retelling through film.

Though America is far from perfect, I heartily believe that “equality of opportunity” is not a myth ... in fact, it is alive, well, and growing closer to completion than when it was first introduced as an idea in the Declaration of Independence. Even with its long journey of ups-and-downs behind and ahead of it, America has presented its people with a system that guarantees every man life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The trouble comes when people mistake equality of opportunity with equality of outcome, which is a different idea altogether. Some people, including the experts, have simply forgotten this “pursuit” aspect, which requires passion, purpose, and hard work, whether mentally or physically. Few things in this existence are free, and happiness is no exception. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood that, and he was not asking for handouts. He asked only that black people be guaranteed the right of pursuit, like everyone else, and that they not be prevented from it because of their skin color.



## The Grape Pickers' Rebellion

*Anna Gabriella Garcia*

*Written for Professor Tucker's English 95*

Anna is currently a Fresh Start student working to achieve her diploma and AA. Her major is undecided, but she plans to transfer to a four-year university. She also would like to travel the world with her camera. Anna felt her biggest struggle in writing her essay was emphasizing the true struggle that Mexican and other migrant workers face. Her advice to others: "Don't procrastinate."

In 1942 the United States entered World War II, and an abundance of people were shipped off to support the war effort, putting a strain on the economy and causing a labor shortage that impacted the agriculture industry greatly. As a result, the United States' agriculture industry was in demand of workers. On August 4, 1942, the U.S. and the Mexican government instituted the Bracero program, a guest work program that allowed Mexican laborers to come to the United States to work and aid farmers. Many Mexican laborers stopped cultivating their land and growing food for their families with the belief that they would be able to earn considerable amounts of money on the other side of the border. Independent farmers' associations and the U.S. Farm Bureau controlled the Bracero contracts. Because the contracts were in English, Braceros often signed without understanding their full rights and the conditions of employment (Marentes). Lee G. Williams, who was the last director of the Bracero Program, described it as a system of "legalized slavery" (Rodriguez-Zinn). The contracts were the beginning of unfair treatment of the Mexican immigrant workers.

Farm owners and their selfish intentions victimized farm workers by overworking and underpaying them. The California farmers were allowed to control all the important decisions about wages and working conditions due to the excessive supply of poor and unorganized workers. As a result, the farmers paid more attention to their own profit than to the welfare of their workers. As stated by the U.S. Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, "No other segment of our population is so poorly paid, yet contributes so much to our Nation's wealth and welfare" (Hartmire). The farm workers were frequently denied improved wages, and many farm workers in California lacked contracts; they did not receive overtime pay, and they would often work and not know the rate of pay. Also, they received no paid holidays or vacations. Most grape pickers in California earned \$1.40 or \$1.50 per hour plus an incentive piece rate during the peak harvest season, but the peak harvest season usually would only last four to six weeks. During the rest of the year their wages hovered around \$1.40 per hour. Work was often irregular and uncertain. The minimum wage, established by California's Industrial Welfare Commission at that time, was \$1.65. According to an independent study done for the University of California, the average grape worker in Kern County was employed 119 days out of the year, yet full employment would be closer to 250 days out of the year (Hartmire). Workers were often in financial

strains due to unsteady employment. Clearly, the payment the workers received was unfair for such long hours of manual labor endured. Infrequent payment and work hours greatly contributed to the poverty of farm workers.

In many instances, farm workers were subject to poor working conditions and were severely mistreated. Multitudes of farms lacked working necessities such as restrooms. Without restrooms available for farm workers' use at the work site, chances of fecal matter contaminating the food increased. Farm workers suffered from dehydration. From working long grueling hours in the sun, workers would sweat and have no way to replenish their bodies since a great number of farmers did not supply water for their workers. If water was supplied, the chance that it would be considered unsanitary was very high. In addition, numerous farm workers would go to work not knowing how long their day would be or how many days they would work that week. Workers could be laid off any time of the day or week, and they could be laid off for days or weeks at a time with no notice and no clear indications of when they would be able to return back to work (Hartmire). In most cases, required breaks and working hour restrictions did not apply. Laws that protected other workers did not protect farm workers (Rodriguez-Zinn). As a result, countless numbers of farm workers fell victim to hazardous working conditions, harmful toxics such as pesticides, and poverty wages.

With numerous workers living in poverty, the conditions they were forced into were intolerable. In a study done by the Governor's Advisory Commission on housing, fewer than twenty percent of the California farm worker families lived in dwellings that could be considered adequate by present standards of health, safety and comfort. In many cases, the only toilet facilities available for workers were pit privies. Thirty percent of all dwellings lacked bathing facilities. Twenty-five percent of housing units lacked basic necessities such as kitchen sinks with running water (Hartmire). Migrant rental housings were packed to capacity and extravagantly priced. In some instances, workers were forced to buy goods from their employers, putting them in a cycle of debt that kept them tied to their employer (Casey). Cesar Chavez, one of the founders of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, once said, "It's ironic that those who toil the soil, cultivate and harvest the fruits, vegetables, and other foods that fill your table with abundance have nothing left for themselves" (Chavez 4). The workers were expected to feed multiple families, yet they were not capable of feeding their own. Farms workers and their families were forced to reside in unmanageable housing conditions. By today's standards, the workers living conditions would be considered unacceptable and degrading.

Migrant workers in California became tired of such abusive treatment. The workers began to unionize and form organizations. On September 8, 1965 the Grape Pickers' Rebellion began in Delano, California. It was at first a joint effort by the Agricultural Workers Organizing committee and the Independent National Farm Workers Association, later known as the United Farms Workers Organizing Committee (Hartmire). Lasting about five years, involving more than 5,000 farm workers, and 17 million Americans boycotting grapes, the strike led to the first successful collective bargaining agreement for farm workers in United States history (Rodriguez-Zinn). The strike was an important event in the formation of the civil rights movement for farm workers.

The Grape Pickers' Rebellion brought the abuse of migrant farm workers to the national forefront. Millions of people across the country participated in grape boycotts in support of the workers. Through their sweat, blood, and struggles the farm workers set up unions and organizations to work for their civil rights. Sadly, the Center for Disease Control still ranks agriculture among one of the most hazardous industries, and farm workers suffer some of the highest work related injury, disease, and fatality rates in the nation. In 1999, the Environmental Protection Agency estimated that pesticides poison at least 10,000 to 20,000 farm workers each year. In 2002, the Department of Labor reported that about 30 percent of all farm workers and their families had incomes below the poverty line (American Farm Labor). With the continuing mistreatment of workers there are still many reasons to fight.

With the low income, unethical work environments, and harsh living conditions, a rebellion was inevitable. Farm workers could no longer tolerate such unfair treatment and had to stand up for their rights as human beings. The Grape Pickers' Rebellion was the first stepping-stone for Mexican migrant workers in achieving equal working opportunities. Today, Mexican migrant workers still come to the United States in hope of experiencing the American dream of better paying jobs and a better life. Unfortunately, even through all the progress in farm workers' rights, many workers are still too commonly victims of workers abuse. As long as workers are still being exploited, battles in the struggle for workers' rights will continue to be fought.

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## Ignorance Is Never Bliss

*Avivette Toilinn Coles*

*Written for Professor Hunt's English 95*

Avivette is interested in the science field, in particular genetics. Her plans after college are to be a geneticist, and at 40 she would like to open a catering business. Avivette's main struggle in writing was talking about her family. When she's writing she doesn't worry about format at first—she lets her fingers do the talking.

In the story “Time to Look And Listen,” the author Magdoline Asfahani told a story that involves discrimination among other things. In the story, Asfahani told us that she was an Arab and a Muslim, but she didn't fully understand what that meant, so like others she disregarded what she did not know. Asfahani's classmates seemed to link her with terrorists because of the fact that she was an Arab and Muslim. Asfahani started to feel hurt, embarrassed, and ashamed of who she was. Since Asfahani did not fully understand her culture, when classmates teased her and told her that where she comes from is an uncivilized and brutal place, she believed them. Asfahani did not start to change her position on the matter until she was in high school. Her grandmother was ill and she had to go back to the Middle East to visit. One of her teachers made a rude comment about her going to the Middle East and that's when she woke up. She realized that like her classmates and teachers, she didn't know anything about where she came from except what was on TV. Asfahani started to realize that she came from a culture that has a very rich history and she decided not to hide who she was anymore. This story was very interesting because a story like hers is not uncommon. Discrimination happens a lot now just as it did in the past because people that are different tend to get brushed away or hated because they are not understood.

I am a mix of African American, Puerto Rican, and German. My immediate family does not like to tell anyone what they are besides African American and I think that like others, they feel more comfortable with what they don't know. My mother is Puerto Rican and German but when people ask her what she is, she says black. I, on the other hand, like the fact that I am a mix of different things. I recently started to try and find out more about my background but I only do this when I am alone. My family doesn't like it when I try and understand or study where we came from. My parents are only trying to teach their children about the African American side. I think this is a form of discrimination. They have brushed off any culture that is different from what they know. My mom grew up around African Americans and so did my dad so that is all they know. We don't speak to a lot of our family from the outside because they won't accept “mutts.” My Puerto Rican family seems to not like us because we don't speak Spanish and we look blacker than anything else. The African American side of my family seems to not like us because we don't look “fully black.” So we are kind of our own family.

I feel a connection with Asfahani because I felt the same way she did. When it was her classmates taunting her, it was my family rejecting me. My mom and dad always have looked at me weird because they think I “talk white” or I don’t “act black.” Although I know they love me, they just don’t seem to appreciate who I am. I embrace all of who I am and not just one part so they don’t like that. Some people may be discriminating and not even realize that they are doing it. Discrimination may be subtle like some just prefer to talk with people who look like them or have the same background as them and no one else; or, it could be that an African American doesn’t like white people. Either way you look at it it’s discrimination. There are a couple differences in Asfahani’s story and mine but the most important one is that I have never felt ashamed of who I am or embarrassed.

In the end Asfahani and I both are trying to understand our cultures better and we are becoming better people for that. The point that Asfahani is trying to get across is that even though some people may reject what they do not understand, that doesn’t mean you should try to hide who you are. We are the minority and not the majority and we are fine with that but I feel that if people were to educate themselves about different races and cultures then we would be able to unite better. I hear “united we stand and divided we fall” coming from different people but no one is really trying to step out of their box that they have become accustomed to in order to embrace new things. The main point in both of these stories is ignorance is never bliss. Learning about other cultures along with your own could help you understand different kinds of people.



## Summary of a Science Article: Newly Discovered Predecessor of Tyrannosaurus Rex

*Cheryl Marie Dusek*

*Written For Professor Hitz's Geology 108/ Biology 105*

Cheryl is obtaining her associates in arts and sciences degree. She will transfer to St. Martin's University to receive her BA and would like to teach in an elementary school. With science not being her strongest area, Cheryl struggled to find an interesting, yet appropriate science article to write about. Her advice for other student writers is to make time for research and start early: "Doing research is like hunting for treasure; it's time-consuming and sometimes surprising."

This article from *Nature*, written in February 2006, reports that scientists found a new dinosaur, *Guanlong wucaii*, in western China. Two small (3 meter), very complete fossilized dinosaur skeletons were found in rocks from the late Jurassic period, 161 million to 156 million years ago, in Xinjiang, China. The new dinosaur's name is translated as "crowned dragon of the five-colored rocks," which describes the colorful "badlands" area where the fossils were found. The dinosaur was named "crowned dragon" because it had a distinctive crest, "a tall, narrow projection with numerous hollow excavations" (666). The article's author connects the crest to the distinctive anatomical features of other Middle and Late Jurassic theropods, such as *Ceratosaurus*, *Proceratosaurus*, and *Monolophosaurus*.

Scientists' discovery of *Guanlong wucaii* is exciting because it provides important evidence about the evolution of *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Previously, scientists speculated that *T. rex* evolved from the large, fierce *Allosaurus* and *Acrocanthosaurus*; although some theorized they evolved from the small, fast coelurosaurs, instead. Eventually, cladistics linked *T. rex* to the coelurosaurs; however, scientists wanted fossil evidence showing the anatomical transformations.

*Guanlong wucaii* was a small carnivore with a primitive pelvis. It had U-shaped teeth in the front of the upper jaw, like a tyrannosaurid, but it also had "blade-like teeth along the side of the jaws and a powerful three-fingered hand" (666), rather than short arms and two-fingered hands like *Tyrannosaurus rex*. The scientists who discovered *Guanlong* prepared an evolutionary analysis which showed tyrannosaurids "arose from the base of the Coelurosauria" (666).

The clear chart included in this article showed the lineage of tyrannosaurids in the context of this new dinosaur discovery. *Guanlong wucaii* has been placed on the tree as evolving from Coelurosauria 161 million years ago, during the late Jurassic; it now marks the beginning of the tyrannosaurid branch. The next descendent of that branch is *Dilong*, a small tyrannosaurid that lived approximately 136 mya.

The discovery of *Guanlong* provided scientists with an important link in the evolution of Tyrannosauroida, and evidence that they were evolving much earlier than scientists were previously able to prove. The article concludes by speculating that the fossilized jaw of an Early Jurassic dinosaur found in China may provide evidence of an even earlier ancestor.

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## Equal Consideration and Ethical Capitalism

*Dale Coleman*

*Written for Professor Cochrane's Philosophy 215*

Dale is studying graphic design and communications at TCC. He would like to pursue a career in public relations or marketing communications. He is interested in mass media and the graphic arts. Dale confesses that staying focused can always be an issue for him while writing his papers. His advice to other student writers: "It is important that writers write."

By now, it should be no secret that we are living in the era of global free market capitalism. The political, economic and ideological reverberations of the Industrial Revolution have penetrated even into the most elusive bastions of human civilization. No culture is too foreign; no tribe is too remote. We are all participants, to some extent, in the global capitalist structure, a structure that, by its very nature, rewards those countries and companies who pursue their own self-interest in the most efficient manner. Often, in the pursuit of those interests, the exploitation of workers and natural resources in developing countries is seen, merely, as an external cost (in the parlance of the economist) of doing business on a global scale. It is the purpose of this paper to advance the idea that, as interconnected human citizens, it is our ethical duty to ensure that every participant in the world marketplace be afforded the basic principles of dignity, respect and fairness, no matter how difficult this task may seem.

Generally speaking, successful capitalist enterprises work by maximizing profits, while minimizing expense. Buy low; sell high; accumulate wealth. This is obviously a simplified model of the nuanced and intricate study of capitalist economics, but it is accurate for our purposes. For example, in the mid 1980s, Nike moved its manufacturing plants from the United States to Southeast Asia where labor could be purchased at rock-bottom prices. Needless to say, the dramatic drop in labor costs did not translate into dramatic savings for consumers, nor did it result in any significant economic boom for the communities in which the new factories were built. However, it did result in dramatic profits for Nike.

It also triggered what Bob Jeffcott, in an article for the *New Internationalist*, refers to as a "race to the bottom." Many other companies, inspired by Nike's profit margins, began to move their manufacturing plants overseas, which in turn caused Asian manufacturers to seek out the lowest-of-the-low wage workers in Asia, South America and Africa. Following the simple pursuit of capitalistic economic self-interest led to unprecedented prosperity and profit in the US garment industry, it also led to the proliferation of unfair wages and deplorable working conditions (1).

These profit maximizing imbalances are not restricted to corporations and factories. The participants in the new global capitalist economy have unfairly stacked the deck against developing nations, making it difficult for them to gain a foothold in a rapidly changing world. Established

countries seek to protect their interests and ensure their future prosperity, without regard for those who might be affected by the weight of their footsteps. Organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund encroach upon the interests (not to mention the natural resources and biodiversity) of developing countries, in the name of “free trade.” Generally speaking, when the long arm of “globalization” reaches into the developing world, it is generally to harvest labor or natural resources, leaving them riddled with debt, social and political turmoil, environmental and health crisis, and—most notably—without the infrastructure required for equal participation in global free-enterprise capitalism. A cynical assessment of this current situation may lead one to believe that this system of global capitalism is inherently doomed. The words of Karl Marx may loom ever-closer to the surface of the common consciousness.

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes (2). When this Marxist viewpoint is considered in light of the sheer scope of global capitalism, the implications are nothing short of terrifying. Are our only options revolution or ruin? Is there any hope for a system of ethical capitalism, or will the pursuit of self-interest always lead to the subjugation and exploitation of some unfortunate group of people? Before we can move beyond this question, we must have a clear understanding of what we mean by “ethical capitalism.” Perhaps “benevolent capitalism” or “humanist capitalism” would be more appropriate, a system that would incorporate equal consideration of the dignity and intrinsic value of all the participants in the global capitalist economy.

We must first relinquish the idea that capitalism can only operate atop the foundation of self-interest. Professor Munyaradzi Felix Murove asserts that the traditional concept of greed has been absolved by the language of self-interest.

Modern capitalism presumes greed to be the main driving force in human economic behavior. For the sake of decency and respectability, the word greed has been replaced by the term self-interest as in our day-to-day conversations; its use does not evoke any feelings of embarrassment, shame or guilt. The term greed, however, conjures up images of vulgarity and utter indecency (3). Some folks argue that concepts like benevolence and charitable love (agape) make for terrific religious sermons and profound philosophical musings, but they don’t hold much weight in the real world, where people are motivated primarily by self-interest (greed). If we are to accept this disposition as reality, any honest attempt at altruism, benevolence or selfless-love will become wholly irrational and—ultimately—totally useless. I am unprepared, at this point in my life, to adopt such a cynical worldview.

There are also those who believe that ethical conditions will automatically result from successful markets. The traditional Smithian economic viewpoint asserts that individuals, in pursuit of their own self-interest, often contribute—inadvertently—to the betterment of society. While this is indeed valid as a truism, is certainly is not a sound argument. You don’t have to be a student of philosophy to understand that sometimes the end doesn’t justify the means. I would like to ask the families of the

64 Bangladeshi workers that were killed, in the Spectrum Sweater Factory collapse of 2005, what they think of Adam Smith's "Unseen Hand" (4).

Then there are those, like conservative analyst Max Borders, who feel that those who are for ethical operation in the global capitalist marketplace, are simply applying first-world standards to a people who are happy, simply to have a job (5). This argument is a particularly insulting semantic bait-and-switch, that assumes all proponents of equal-consideration feel that third world citizens would be better off if they were able to play video games in air conditioned condos, whilst jamming out to the latest Miley Cyrus album.

Dignity, respect and fairness are not simple cultural mores, or western peculiarities. They are basic human principles that should be afforded to all people, regardless of their geographic location or economic standing. As Peter Singer puts it, "The facts about the existence of suffering are beyond dispute" (6). Let us not obfuscate the issue, or play with words at the expense of basic morality. As interconnected citizens of this planet, we have the moral obligation to treat each other fairly. The fact that it is often complicated and difficult to do so doesn't mean that we should not make an honest attempt.

There is a principle that is consistent throughout every major religion, both in the West and in the East. That is the ethic of reciprocity, or the Golden Rule. The concept is as simple as the practice is elusive—Treat others as you would have them treat you. This is a basic moral principle that existed long before global capitalism and will probably outlive any corporation or government currently in power. At the risk of drifting too far off into the ether, I will suggest that we may do ourselves a service and heed the warnings of the philosophers, prophets, teachers and poets, or at the very least, consider ourselves within the context of the great cascading river, which is human existence.

I am not naïve. I thoroughly understand that the reality of global free enterprise capitalism is complex and multifaceted. I also understand that to further incorporate humanistic ethics into the current capitalist structure will require a titanic effort from many people, who may or may not be particularly interested in making such an effort. However, it is imperative that we make every effort to advance morally and ethically as humans, even if the financial or economic cost is great. After all, "what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (7)

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## 6405 S. Osler

*Glenda Smith-Stewart*

*Written for Professor Fox's English 101*

Glenda is majoring in business at TCC. Her future plans are to transfer to a four-year university. A struggle she faced in writing her paper was "deciding whether or not to change the names to protect the innocent." Glenda encourages other student writers to write from their heart.

There are so many subjects that are intriguing to me in the world. The fact that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The fact that I can feel the wind, but I am not able to see it. The variety of animal and plant life is just awe inspiring. But, the most wondrous to me is the human race. I think God knew what he was doing when he made all of us different: the Master of diversity. My neighborhood growing up was a melting pot of diversity. That neighborhood shaped and molded my character into the person I am today. In the article "People Like Us," David Brooks writes of diversity. He asks the question, "Do we really care about diversity, and, even deeper, should we care?" If are to talk about diversity, we need to be specific as to which part, to what degree, and to what extent.

I was raised in San Diego, California, from 1955 to 1967. I am third to the youngest out of nine children. My mother was a certified nurses' aide. My father worked for Convair, a factory that made airplane parts. My family lived in a three-bedroom duplex owned by my Uncle Johnny, who was in masonry; he and Aunt Exie lived next door. My neighborhood consisted of people from all over the world: Poland, Japan, Guam, Mexico, The Philippines, China, and Italy. There were also people from Boston, Minneapolis, Mississippi, and even some born in San Diego. My family was the only black family in the neighborhood. It's funny because I didn't know I was black until years later. Was there diversity in my neighborhood? Did we care about diversity? Were there people like us?

Growing up in my neighborhood, diversity didn't really make a difference to me. Number one, I didn't know what diversity was and number two, I don't think anyone else knew, either. My family always had food on the table, our clothes were clean, and dinnertime was always at six in the evening, as with the rest of the kids in the neighborhood, and we better not be late. All of us kids had to be in the house when the street lights came on. Sometimes, our parents would let us play outside under the street lights. The thought of diversity never even crossed my mind. In our neighborhood, there were doctors, dentists, factory workers, construction workers, and parents who owned their own businesses. Was there diversity? Of course there was. Did we know it? I didn't, because I didn't know what diversity was at the time. Did we care? I don't know. All I know is that in my neighborhood every mother treated all of us children the same. I couldn't tell who was rich or who was poor until I went inside their homes. Were we diverse? Did we even care?

When I was a child, I didn't think about things like diversity. I just played with the children who were there; those children were all different colors. They were from all over the world, and they were my friends. The parents treated me like I was one of their own. All of us girls spent the night at each others' houses, and when they got in trouble, I got in trouble, too. I remember each and every one of them. On the top corner of 64th and Osler is where the Stephens lived. Their mother was Japanese and their father was Caucasian. Mr. Stephen was an Amway distributor, and I must say did very well for himself. They owned a beautiful home with a swimming pool. Their daughter Linda was my friend, so my brother and I got to swim all of the time. Two houses down on the same side of the street lived the Lawrences. Mr. Lawrence was a mechanic, and Mrs. Lawrence, whose first name was Carmen, was a homemaker. She was from Guam. They had two children, David, who was 18, and Pebbles, who was just under a year. I remember David was so fine!

Next to the Lawrences lived Michael Arms and family. We used to call his family "poor white trash" because they were always borrowing, and they weren't friendly with the rest of us. They never even went to church. Michael was 17 and had two brothers, Billy, nine, and Snotty Nose Red, 18 months old. Us kids called him that because he had flaming red hair, his nose was always running, and he always had on a dirty diaper. Their mother had some kind of mental problem. She was a very thin, drawn, pale-looking woman. She was always in her house coat and always had a RC Cola in her hand. I think she drank a 12-pack or more a day. I thought that was cool, because in the summertime, we could get into the movies with six RC bottle tops. I wanted her to drink as much RC as she could. I had no idea that RC Cola was making her sicker. I didn't find that out until some years later. I still wonder if the reason they were so poor is because they spent all their money on RC.

Two houses down from Michael, on the same side of the street, was where Marie Anderson, who was Caucasian, lived. She was the only girl out of five children. Marie had the coolest mom in the world. She was a tall, slim, beautiful woman with shoulder-length brown hair and green eyes. She would chase my brother around the yard because he was a prankster. When she couldn't catch him, she would laugh and say, "That damn Timmy." She also had a bad heart condition, but that didn't stop her from playing with us children. The family lived in both sides of the duplex they rented. Marie, Allen and Glenn's father had been killed in an accident a few years before. After that, Marie's mother married Mr. Hawkins, an officer in the Navy. Our family lived directly across the street from Marie. Paulana Rydquist, who was Polish and my best friend, lived next door to us on the left. Paulana's dad was a contractor, and her mother was a stay at home mom. I remember when it was time to come into the house, Paulana's mom would whistle for her, a very loud, shrill-pitched whistle. We would laugh and Paulana would turn red.

Across the street, next door to Marie, was where Victor Dontigni lived. Victor was Mexican and an only child. The Dontignis owned their own home. His mother didn't speak any English, and his father spoke broken English but could get his point across. Victor used to teach me bad words in Spanish and have me go say them to his mother. On the other side of Victor was the Vatimos (Loretta, Bernadette, Elaine and Theresa). They were an Italian family with six children. Mr. Vatimo was a Catholic school teacher, and he was the meanest man I had ever met. They owned and occupied both

sides of their duplex. Elaine Budreau lived next door to Paulana and directly across the street from the Vatimos. Elaine had two brothers and an albino German shepherd named Snowball. Their family was from Boston, and her mother spoke with a heavy Bostonian accent. I loved to hear her say “fork,” which sounded like “fauk.” Their family was kind of strange because each of the children, by the age of four, had to have their tonsils removed, whether they need it or not. The Flores family, who were Mexican, lived next door to the Budreaus, in the same duplex. There was Willie, Larry and Sylvia.

Around the corner, just at the bend, lived the Holliday family, a Caucasian family whose father was also in the Navy. The kids were Leslie, John Jr., and Susan. The family had lived in Okinawa but were originally from Texas. They had a panchinko machine that all of us neighborhood kids could play with. The next duplex over is where the Palusos, and Italian family, lived. Mr. Paluso worked at Convair with my father. His son Joe rode a motorcycle. Joe was a rebel, and Sal rode a skateboard better than any of us kids. I know there was diversity, but no one talked about it. I don’t think we had a name for it back then, and it didn’t stop us from getting along. Could that have been because no one cared about diversity?

In his essay, Brooks takes up some key points about race, wondering if somewhere in this country there is a truly diverse neighborhood, in which a black Pentecostal minister lives next to a white anti-globalization activist, who lives next door to an Asian short-order cook. In my neighborhood, we didn’t worry about color, economic status, religion or things like that. Sometimes, people don’t have control over where they live or who they live next door to. In my neighborhood, there was no question that we were all of a different race, but that was the beauty of it. I will never forget when Marie’s mother died. Her name was Joan. She was pregnant at the time and had to have open heart surgery. This was her fourth heart surgery, and she told us kids that she wasn’t going to make it this time. She died on the operating table, and so did the baby she was carrying. That day, it was not a question of race or diversity. It was a matter of a people needing each other. Every mother in the neighborhood (except for Mrs. Arms) came to the aid of the family. Some of our families took turns keeping the two younger kids until their father could figure out what to do. Brooks says, “People want to be around others who are roughly like themselves. That’s called community” (70). However, we were not just a community, we were also family.

The important point about diversity is that it is neither good nor bad. It is just diversity, and it is no big deal unless you make it a big deal. The good thing about the world is the fact that people are different. People like to feel safe, comfortable and wanted. I also believe that people like us just want to be loved, and when we have something in common, we tend to gravitate towards that commonality. Diversity is all over the world, you can’t get away from it nor can you stop it. Brooks makes the comment, “Human beings, if they are to live well, will have to move through a series of institutions and environments, which may be individually homogeneous but, taken together, will offer diverse experiences” (71). People adapt to their environment, and life is one big institution after another. We play the cards we’ve been dealt, and if we live long enough, we have to choose but to have experiences.

I can’t say what went on in other neighborhoods. I can only talk about what happened in mine. I am so blessed to have lived in that neighborhood in San Diego, California. In that small, but oh-so-

diverse, neighborhood is where my character was shaped. The love of people like us gave me a good strong sense of morals, values, and an excellent gift that I take every place I go. They gave me the gift of caring. The friendships I developed, and the love that was shown to me, is what makes me the person I am today. That experience is priceless, and in my opinion, diversity is the natural order of things. No matter where your neighborhood, no matter what your profession, always remember there are two things in life that can't be bought or taken away: those memories and good friends.



## My Glass Half Empty: Drinking Fully From the Cup of Life

*J.R. Nickel*

*Written for Professor Cochrane's World Philosophy 190*

J.R. Nickel is majoring in English and philosophy at TCC. A tutor at the Writing and Tutoring Center, he plans to become a teacher. J.R.'s advice for student writers is to just write: "It's the most important thing."

Veni, Vidi, Dormivi Alveus. Neco, Quod Incunabula Alveus. Atqui, Tabula Rasa Novus.  
I came, I saw, I slept in the river bed. I was put to death and birthed from the river bed;  
any yet, I revived a clean slate.

—J. R. Nickel, "I slept in the river bed"

Children are born as blank canvases with infinite freedom and possibilities to paint it as desired. But babies become children and the world teaches them of their inadequacy at painting; and religions play with high stakes. It's all or nothing, either believe or forsake it all. The fear of the unknown becomes the motivator; thus, religion becomes an insurance policy. The religion then tells these people to lay prostrate before the supreme, as to completely surrender to the Will of a Tyrant, and they will not be harmed.

After years of this, children no longer trust themselves to paint. They hand the brush to religion, which is quick to take over, covering the canvas in black and white, separating the world into believers and non-believers, saints and sinners, among other dualistic ideologies. After awhile, children begin to take everything at face value. It's safer that way. At least, that's what they are taught; and they fear to go inside themselves because it is uncharted territory. But that is exactly where they must go, inside themselves, because that is where truth lay. The only problem is that after years of being guided down a labyrinth of uncertainty, they forgot to remember the way back. It is easy to give up before starting. It is easy to go back, pray, worship, and forsake the heart; and the others who do try to get out, usually give up half way.

There are many names for these people, but, in generalization, I used to separate them into three. The first types are conformers, those whose intuition tell them they are not happy, that something is wrong, but ignore it.

The second types are non-conformists. They are the people who heed the call but don't have the Will to follow through. Most of the time, through pride or fear, they quit and can't or won't return. They become atheists or agnostics. The further they go before turning back, the more severe they fall back. I have seen some become suicidal or nihilistic.

The third types are revolutionaries, those who see the folly in the system, so they rebuild it; but in doing so, they use the same parts. These people have many names: politicians, prophets, new-age spiritualists, etc. However, after reading a book, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha*, I realized the error of my classification. To explain it, I apologize, I must add a fourth classification: The spiritual rebel. A rebel is a person who does not quit (although at times they may try or want to), who does not become a non-conformist, and who does not just rebuild the old system. A spiritual rebel is a person who takes full drink from the cup of life, before trying to scoff at its bitterness.

### **Part One: Huh?**

At first, I thought my own type ideology was going to fit with the book, *Siddhartha*. It was something I had taken comfort in before. It is nice to nod knowingly at a book, decoding the outcome before it happens. This book, I thought, was going to be another book about a revolutionary, for I considered the Buddha one, and I knew Herman Hesse vaguely based Siddhartha's life on the Buddha's.

The first half of the book cemented the thought in my head. Discontented with what was being taught among the Brahmans, Siddhartha leaves his life behind and becomes a Samana. This was a clear sign of a revolutionary. He took the first step relatively painlessly, another sign, I thought. He was not a conformist. He heeded the call and had the Will to follow it.

After three years with the Samanas in the forest, practicing self-denial, the emaciated Siddhartha feels the call again. Partially from youthful impatience but mostly through his own intuitions that living the life of a Samana would get him nowhere, Siddhartha leaves with Govinda, his boyhood friend and shadow, to seek training from a teacher they had heard rumors of, a teacher named Buddha. Siddhartha had doubts, but Govinda, always being a follower, assured Siddhartha. The paradox of this confused me slightly. After all, how could Siddhartha, an interpretation of the life of Buddha, and the Buddha exist at the same time? How could Siddhartha become a revolutionary like the Buddha if he became a follower of the Buddha? Perhaps Siddhartha would become a quitter; but trusting Hesse's authorial skills, I dredged on, giving both him and Siddhartha the benefit of the doubt. Neither Hesse nor Siddhartha disappointed me.

Although he knew Buddha was a wise teacher, a saint, a person who was what people claimed him to be, Siddhartha did not trust him, not because of his teachings, which Siddhartha thought were perfect, nor from any contradiction in Buddha's quality. Instead, Siddhartha did not trust that any teacher, including the Buddha, could give him anything he needed. Siddhartha left the Buddha and his friend Govinda. I made another mental check in my head on the side of revolutionary.

As he left, however, he had an experience which mystified me. I felt like I too was experiencing it. A feeling of inner peace and tranquility fell upon Siddhartha. He finally realized that he had been trying to follow another's path, and that was the reason of his discontent. His soul opened. Colors became crisp, sounds sharp, smells acute. He was finally realizing what it was to experience things the way he would, not someone else. At this moment in time, I thought Hesse should have ended the book. I did not realize that Hesse had another plan in mind, for both Siddhartha and me.

Disappointment fell on me again as Siddhartha met Kamala and fell in love. I took for granted that he was not yet fully enlightened. I had imagined him becoming another Buddha with followers who came to him seeking guidance and wisdom, not him falling into a boyish love with a courtesan. The contradiction felt like a betrayal. Siddhartha, who had just claimed his freedom, chained himself to the lips of a girl. He ignored his intuition and fell into stupidity. I wanted to put the book down.

I felt the decades that passed Siddhartha by while he stayed in the city, fell in love with Kamala, and became a rich and prominent life as a business man were decades spent in stupidity. How could he bind himself to another's path? A conformer, I called him in scorn. And after a few decades, he realized he was what I had called him, a conformer. Out of politeness, I refrained from telling him I told you so. He stood outside the city, looked down into the water, and wished to plunge himself into its murky depths.

The old life returned, however, after three decades. He became a seeker again, who was on his path, I thought again, to becoming a revolutionary. He proved me wrong and settled down with a river man, Vasudava. They lived as hermits.

His time with Vasudava proved to be the most rewarding of his life. He learned the lessons of the river, he lived a life of simplicity, and he was never in want; but tragedy struck him again. He lost his love, Kamala, to a snake bite and his son, Siddhartha, to Samsara. I was confused. How could he find his path by a river? He was neither a conformist nor a non-conformist, nor was he a revolutionary, so what was he?

### **The Spiritual Rebel with a Full Bladder**

The problem I had with classifying Siddhartha came from my limited understanding of what a spiritual path ought to be. The last part of the book opened up a new level of understanding to me. It made me see the errors in the way I divided the world and myself. If Siddhartha had quit after leaving the Buddha—like I thought Hesse, at first, should have done—he would have surely lost himself. He was not ready. The experience was just his first step out of the labyrinth with untainted eyes, with eyes of a newborn. He made his “home in this world.” He saw “something new on every step of his path,” things that “had always been there.” He realized that “beautiful was this world,” and he was “thus childlike.” The awakening was nothing more than a rebirth. It was his first real step. Everything he experienced now was his and his alone.

His spirituality could never be reached as a Brahman or Samana or Buddhist. They helped plant the seed, but none of them could grow it, for a seed can't grow on water alone. It needs other nutrients. Spirituality alone—like what the Samanas practiced—would have drowned the seed. Seeds need something physical to dig their roots into. Seeds need something sensuous, something passionate, and something earthy. Siddhartha needed Kamala. She helped him plant his roots in the ground. Kamala was the embodiment of the earthy. Her home was a pleasure garden, her lips were “like a freshly cracked fig,” and her body made every earthly thing in Siddhartha's quiver. I know now that when he rubbed oil in his hair and shaved his beard he was not conforming but simply planting his roots. Something that a Samana had never attempted before.

Even the Buddha had to first plant his roots in the soil. He was born a prince, had all earthly things provided for him, and his father would have given him his heart's desire. Besides being destined to be the Buddha, he was destined to be a king, a great ruler of the earthly domain. So to did Siddhartha have to become like a prince. While with Kamala, “he had learned to eat tenderly and carefully prepared food, even fish, even meat and poultry, spices and sweets, and to drink wine, which causes sloth and forgetfulness. He had learned to play with dice and on a chess-board, to watch dancing girls, to have himself carried about in a sedan-chair, to sleep on a soft bed.”

Kamala was able to help the seed plant its roots and grow, but she could never help it blossom. She did not have the nutrients Siddhartha needed. He grew discontent; he thought the decades spent planting his roots were a waste. Earlier, I would have agreed, but now I see this as a time where he made his roots in the ground strong and dug them deep; but he did not, at the time, see the value of his time with Kamala. The wheel of Samsara again seemed bleak. He almost drowned himself in the river, but, deep down, he knew better. He fell asleep, and was healed by the call of wholeness, the OM.

Now that the seed was firmly planted, and its trunk had long since broke soil, the seed, now a tree, needed to bloom, but first, it had to experience winter. He had experienced joy; now he had to experience pain. He needed the nutrients that only pain could provide. Life had to be experienced in full, a thing most spiritual seekers fail to do. His swing from one extreme to another brought him a moment of respite, a moment of balance. He learned many things during this moment, when he and Vasudava worked the river. But now he had to experience loss. Kamala was on her own journey having finally left the physical to go find her path and blossom. She, by chance, happened upon the river where Siddhartha had replanted his tree which was ready to bud. But again by chance, a snake struck her; and with her death, Siddhartha was thrust into winter. He learned that winter has its own beauty, for she had left behind another seed, Siddhartha's son, who he had not yet met. His son was unruly, and extended the winter. Siddhartha worked through the winter with a heavy heart; and when his son ran away, Siddhartha never thought he would see the sun again. He felt like he would break, but his roots were deep. He recovered; he survived, and he had the nutrients needed to blossom.

Vasudava saw that Siddhartha had gathered all of life up and had taken a full drink. All Vasudava had to do now was give Siddhartha a shove. Vasudava took Siddhartha out on the river for one last time. He didn't tell Siddhartha what to listen for, just to listen. Siddhartha felt everything coming together. “Listen better!” Vasudava whispered. The cup of Samsara was drunk and Siddhartha was satiated. The path Vasudava, Buddha, and Siddhartha took were only possible because they were rebels. They drank life and smiled. They combined the physical and the spiritual. One more brick just fell into place.

## **Conclusion**

Before I read this book, I was a revolutionary, a collector. Like a man pulling a cart, I went around gathering bits and pieces of other people's paths, taped them together, and claimed them as my own. After reading this book, however, I realize that I don't need more teachings or philosophies or knowledge. I had been a Govinda, a shadow, following behind other's paths. I was afraid to venture too far should I get lost, yet, at the same time, I was still in the labyrinth and did not realize it.

While I was busy collecting, life was happening and experiences were passing me by. I thought sacred texts were my only teachers, but I did not realize that life itself was the greatest teacher. Hermeneutics would only get me so far. I needed to plant my roots, but the only teachings I thought relevant were from people other than my self. After this realization, the importance of Siddhartha's journey hit me. I was neither planted in the soil nor drinking fully from the cup of life fully. It made me realize that I had fought passed priest and bishop, slew the demon in my soul—the last remnant of Christianity—traveled from god to Goddess to God and back to Goddess, became a humanist, crashed into determinism, then cynicism, was almost caught by nihilism, pulled myself out only to be caught by the sly wink of a monk. I have yet to plant my roots in the ground. I need to be at once ground and sky. My seed is now planted, and I am thirsty. I will become a rebel. Samsara has told me that much, for I am ready to grow. My path is my own.

I never have thought myself a glass half empty type of person, but my glass is half empty, and my smile is full, for I have only a half a glass left to drink.



## The Link between Military Nurses and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

*Jennifer N. Orta*

*Written for Professor Bonnell's Nursing 221*

Jennifer is majoring in nursing at TCC. She plans to work as an ICU registered nurse after college. During the course of writing her paper, she found the subject too interesting and wanted to know much more than what the focus was for her paper. Her advice to other student writers: "Write about a topic that interests you -- that way you have the passion to create a work of art in the end."

### **Thesis and Abstract:**

Nurses may have developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following their war experience due to the lack of preparation for the perils they were faced with, clinical inexperience, and sleep deprivation. The supporting information throughout this research of PTSD related to military nurses following war time is an eye opener to say the least. Although PTSD can be found as a result of other traumatic events in one's life, the focus on the following data will be based on war time nurses and the psychological effects war had on them. For this research, concentration has been primarily on the Vietnam War for the sake of not getting overwhelmed with technicalities of each war in American history. One can assume, however, that the effects of war on military nurses are similar throughout all wars.

### **The Link between Military Nurses and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**

The art of nursing originated with the famous Florence Nightingale. The services provided by her and her colleagues were on the most basic level of human care-giving to the fallen men during the Crimean War of 1853-1856. The nursing profession has developed immensely into a vast encompassing role during war time; but the sights, sounds, and smells have changed little. The experience nurses endure during war can cause long-term psychological problems no matter what day and age we are in. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening or overwhelming traumatic event such as military combat (Antai-Otong, 2007). A more specific statistic from the National Center for PTSD reveals 15.2% of Vietnam veterans and 30% of men and women in more recent war zones are likely to develop PTSD (Antai-Otong, 2007). Nurses may have developed PTSD following their war experience due to the lack of preparation for the perils they were faced with, clinical inexperience, and sleep deprivation.

Due to the sheer volume and severity of casualties during war, it is no wonder why many nurses developed psychological issues post war time. As in the Vietnam War, one soldier after another starved for medical attention. The nurse would have to mentally formulate in a matter of seconds who needed what and who is worth expending the limited amount of energy and supplies on with life saving interventions. There was a huge amount of guilt felt by the nurses when soldiers were put in the

“expectant” category; expecting to die (Wynd, 2006). These patients were in need of emotional support while they lay to die, and even that was hard to accomplish due to time constraints and lack of nursing staff. In addition, there were only a few medical facilities all injured soldiers were sent to with minimal medical staff on duty. This caused less than desirable patient to nurse ratios. The casualties seen were also nothing short of horrific and the training provided to the nurses did not prepare them for what they would see out in the field.

Although in theory a better nurse to patient ratio would be the most desirable situation, there is a slim chance it would logistically be feasible. When you look at the numbers of armed forces during the Vietnam War it becomes quite evident that the odds are stacked against the nursing personnel. There were over 250,000 US military personnel wounded and 58,132 military men and women killed. These numbers far outweighed the approximate 7500 US military nurses. This number included Navy nurses on two hospital ships, Air Force flight nurses involved in the evacuation of wounded soldiers, and Army, Navy, and Air Force nurses located at hospitals (Scannell-Desch, 2004). More nurses would need to be recruited in order to fulfill this intervention, which would lead to more needed military nurse training, and thus more time. Again, if this was something that was initiated prior to an anticipated war, it could possibly work. This is assuming, however, that civilian nurses would want to transition into military nurses of course.

Providing war-like training was simply not available due to not having the time to do so. At the beginning of WWII, medical military personnel were below desired levels and thus a draft was initiated. This was done for the majority of civilian medical personnel though, which meant these individuals were trained for combat situations in an accelerated timeframe. Approximately two-thirds of all American physicians under the age of 45, that were also physically fit, were enlisted in the armed forces by 1943 (“Military Medicine During The Twentieth Century” n.d.). So not only were these individuals trained in a short amount of time, but they were also trained in war theory of which they had never experienced.

Another factor to consider with the above barriers is the inability to predict how an individual will react to real war scenarios. Directly before WWII, pre-induction tests were administered to attempt to eliminate psychologically unfit military personnel and thus remove most possibilities of PTSD in the future. These tests could pick out the most frank of behavioral disorders, but it was in no way a perfect solution (“Military Medicine During The Twentieth Century” n.d.). Everyone, without a doubt, will have a different reaction to stressful situations and this will only be evident in those stressful combat situations themselves. This involves the unknown reaction a highly experienced civilian nurse may experience as well as a recently graduated nurse.

During the enlistment phase of the Vietnam War, the majority of nurses were sent over straight out of nursing school. The minimum age requirements were 21, but some later reported being younger. The amount of clinical experience had by these nurses included their education at a three-year diploma school and basic training through the military. With this inexperience and immaturity came stress during the high volume and extent of casualties seen. Many nurses describe completing highly technical

procedures and interventions without having the training necessary. One such nurse tells of opening a wound herself and clamping off a vessel which was bleeding out (Sorrin, 2006).

The level of education and experience nurses had prior to their military training and combat-seen time makes a difference in how they may see a given situation and how they will manage it psychologically after the stressor is gone. One study, relating nurses with an undergraduate degree (RN1) with nurses holding the same degree but with an added 6-12 months full-time study within a specialized area (RN2) revealed several differences with the learning approach taken by each group. For example, RN1s placed more emphases on the training facilities used and the real-life scenarios involved than did the RN2s. RN2 nurses desired relevant symptoms they may come across and RN1 nurses needed more concrete holistic scenarios (“A Comparison of Experiences of Training Emergency Care in Military Exercises and Competences among Conscript Nurses with Different Levels of Education” 2007). This can be explained with the fact that experienced nurses draw upon their previous clinical experience and intuition to create a plan of care in a split second. This can help minimize PTSD by simply taking that added stress off decision making at the most basic level of nursing care to wounded soldiers. However, this would also mean that different military training curriculum would have to be created for these two types of nurses to get what each needed for war time (“A Comparison of Experiences of Training Emergency Care in Military Exercises and Competences among Conscript Nurses with Different Levels of Education” 2007).

Compounding the lack of preparation and experience, nurses were deprived of sleep. Many nurses reported not being able to fall asleep, even if lucky enough to have the opportunity to do so in the first place. To fall asleep you have to be relaxed and in a state of comfort, both of which are lacking during war. One nurse recalls lying down in a dark room after a long period of work and having no room in her head to fall asleep. There was too much going on inside her mind that she was unable to relax and fall asleep (Freedman and Rhoads, 1987). In addition, with the numerous amount of admits from the field there was little time to sleep. There are many accounts of working at full patient capacity with 12 hour work days, 6 days per week (Sorrin, 2006). That said, it is easy to see the discrepancy and impact the lack of sleep can have on nurses when it is estimated that 90% of people require 8 hours of sleep per 24 hours (Blachowicz & Letizia 2006, p. 15, 275).

Many tools have been integrated by the Department of Defense since the Vietnam War in regards to PTSD. This includes virtual reality software and self assessments of mental status available with on-site computers and health reassessments completed after a tour is completed. This is for the family as well as the veteran (Brewin, 2007). Incorporated in military nurses training are regular drills, emergency response teaching, triage protocols, and having communication “roles and channels” in place (Wynd, 2006).

Treatment of PTSD may include cognitive behavior therapy, group therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, psychodynamic psychotherapy, and pharmacological management with Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (“National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder” 2007).

In summary, PTSD can be caused by any stressful stimuli, specifically the jeopardy of war time. The dearth of mental, emotional, and physical preparation of war, clinical inexperience, and sleep deprivation all have negative compounding effects to a state of well being for war-time nurses. This disorder may be relieved with more intense, war-like training before going to the battle field; longer clinical exposure with a preceptor period prior to deployment; and lastly, better nurse to patient ratios to help with the hectic environment (Scannell-Desch 2005).

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## Some Write Right, Sum Rite Rong

*Joe Floyd*

*Written for Professor Fox's English 101*

Joe's area of interest at TCC is business and he will transfer to City University to obtain a master's of science in project management. A struggle when writing his paper was "trying to find the right words to express my thoughts and feelings." Joe encourages other writers to start with an outline and believes you should express yourself to the fullest.

Throughout the world many people strive to break free of social expectations; these expectations lead us to have two selves, the perceived self and the presenting self. The perceived self is what, or who, we really are, while the presenting self is what we want others to see. While in these two realms, we also tend to have two voices. Some may see these voices as dialect, jargon, or Ebonics. While growing up in the once run down ghettos of Tacoma, Washington, I myself acclimated to my surroundings and acquisitioned two voices: white voice and black voice. The white voice, also known as Standard English, is great in starting the fundamental process of speech in children, but it lacks character and everyone is expected to learn it. Schools tell many children to go above and beyond, to stand out of the crowd, express their thoughts, but how are we supposed to do this when were taught to speak and write like everyone else? Black English was the answer; unlike Standard English, Black English was not clean sounding and did not follow strict rules, which gave new ways to communicate ideas, and to get feeling across that Standard English lacks. Dialect can have many different meanings; however, without it, students cannot write eloquent essays.

Much of the Black English is relatively easy to understand, yet at the same time much of it can be taken out of context. Although Black English is still the preferred language in parts of Hill Top Tacoma, you must remember that the language is ambiguous. Whether written down or spoken, many Black English dialects will have two different denotations. Someone may approach you and say in Black English, "A man dem shooz iz filthy." In white English that same statement would be written, "Hey man those shoes are nice" so you can see it was not meant to be a rude comment but also how easy it could be taken out of context. Another example would be the word "omelet" as in, "Although you did not follow directions omelet this one slide." While much of the meaning can be easily confused, it is very important to note that Black English is a unique way of speaking which has its roots in Western African languages. These Black English dialects have many synonyms, such as African American vernacular English, Ebonics, Black slang, broken English and improper English. Black English dialects have many more different syntax, phonics, and grammatical structures than college Standard English. This difference can impede on the success rate of an individual's writing when dialect is not allowed to show exquisite thought, yet the writing is critiqued by teachers for not having enough thought.

To enable students to succeed in writing Standard English, they must first be able to grasp and express their own dialect. College students who were raised speaking Black English must use this dialect as the basis for building a bridge for learning Standard English in college writing. In “Nobody Mean More to Me Than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan,” June Jordan states, “Students had formulated Black English guide lines, by consensus, and they were now writing with remarkable beauty, purpose, and enjoyment” (348). Jordan is suggesting that by allowing students to write without judgment, without criticism in their writings for improper written speech, their imaginations will shine brighter than the sun. Our imagination gives us our insight on how or what we write. If students become limited to only using Standard English in college then the writing may become flawed. Exceptional essays filled with thoughtful ideas show exquisite imagination and a distinguishable voice. When dialect gets used between students, smiles arise, and so does conversational enjoyment. It allows students to feel a connection or a belonging to that person or group making the bond between one another stronger. Dialect is also fun to use since it is like belonging to a secret society that no one else will get the privilege to join unless the language is learned. Teachers who want students to enjoy writing can also apply this enjoyment by letting students use dialect in their writing. Nevertheless, when we are free to imagine and express on paper without disparagement, our intangible voice becomes tangible.

Writing in dialect helps us to capture a voice in essays that is almost impossible to do without it. Jordan writes, “If you speak or write Black English, your ideas will necessarily possess that otherwise elusive attribute, voice” (346). Jordan is proposing that without the use of Black English, students will not be able to express their ideas well enough to give power of speech. Many times when students sit down to write they are trapped searching for Standard English words to replace their customary dialect. When our minds search for these elusive words to replace dialect with, we tend to pick powerless words to express ourselves because we cannot find the right vocabulary. Allowing dialect captures more feeling of the writer’s voice on the topic and more thoroughly explained expressions. Using Ebonics like “dats wack,” instead of Standard English, “I do not like that,” sounds more powerful and the voice is better presented in the writer. Without having to search the mind for big intellectual words to use, Black English allows the speaker to shorten the words and still get a meaningful impact of the voice across. Allowing Black English in college is not just good to express the writer but also to express the writing.

Dialect can have many different meanings; however, without it, students cannot write eloquent essays. Moreover, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution is freedom of speech. The breakdown of that amendment also states, “Freedom of expression is sometimes preferred, since the right is not confined to verbal speech but is understood to protect any act of seeking, receiving and imparting information or ideas, regardless of the medium used” (Wikipedia.org). Therefore, if we can express ourselves through mediums such as television, radio or newspapers, we should be also allowed to use dialect in college writing. Since freedom of speech is about expressing our thoughts, yet colleges demand such high standards in the way we articulate our thoughts into papers, how can we truly fulfill those requirements if we are not to use our own dialect? By allowing students the right to apply a voice otherwise hidden in writing, teachers can empower students to write more creatively, more insightful, and better yet, express more thoughts and feelings.

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## All Have Fallen Short

*Jonathan Gibbon*

*Written for Professor Fox's English 101*

Jonathan intends to acquire an associate's degree in business management or administration. Later he would like to transfer to the University of Washington.

Jonathan's main struggle in writing papers is revision. He explains: "It is easy for me to focus on microscopic details instead of overall content." He believes it is crucial for any writer to read.

Let us get down to brass tacks. I am a white male, age twenty-six, raised in a Democratic Kansas college town. Twenty miles from my home town the geography and political diversity flattens into road kill. The workforce employs predominately white folk, and the primary popular concern is not tornados or Toto from the Wizard of Oz, but pro-life demonstrations, creationism, and the price of crops. Fate has graced me, though, an escape from the sunflowers and amber waves of grain, allowing me to experience multiple terrains from New Mexico to New York. Yet each city that welcomed me seemed dissected. Milwaukee split its suburbs by economical brackets, Seebree, Kentucky dichotomously separated Hispanics from the "Good ol' Boys" (both of which made fun of each other), New York City staked their loyalty to certain boroughs against the others, and Jersey City pitted occupation against occupation, so that no matter the statistical diversity, segmentation naturally ensued. It is clear that all of us have fallen short of the grand ideal of diversity, from state to state, interest to interest. No matter the extent this nation attempts to diversify the masses, we ourselves continually coagulate into like groups. In this case, is diversity really a matter of conglomeration where the population is integrated for the mere sake of integration? Perhaps, we should redefine diversity in lieu of our shortcomings. Diversity seemingly only exists in self-prescribed parameters and is unattainable by groups or institutions since the dynamics of diversity are preset by the individual and not the collective.

In fact, to diversify a collective seems incongruent to both definitions of diversity and a collective. Sure, the white middle classes may refer to the inner city as a place where-dragons-be, and the downtrodden may slink around avoiding "the man", graffiti might be gang-related, but all of these are assumptions which wedge their insecurities into diversity. These cases are all uneducated generalities which are accepted only by the individual who adheres to them. David Brooks in "People Like Us" describes these natural delusions as "half-truths about the supposed awfulness of the other side" (71). The creation of such "half-truths" provides a release from the blame and guilt that the self-segmented individual may experience. Thus, "we are finding places where we are comfortable and where we feel we can flourish" (68) in order to mimic the ostrich with its head buried. As long as the individual routinely accepts broad generalizations and abstains from perceptual inconsistency, then psychological ease sprouts forth. The individual seeks this comfort for personal benefit and of his/her own will.

Subscribing to a clique becomes a secondary enabler to ones own “half-truth”. Is it truly fair to chastise, as Brooks does, groups that segment according to preference? Granted “it is appalling that Americans know so little about one another” (70-71) but we individually, not any collective, selfishly opt to oust conflicting stimuli or opposing research.

When statistically we are confronted with, as Brooks suggests, our “absurdly unlikely groupings” (70) and our failure to bridge an ethnic, cultural, or economic gap, a psychological disturbance occurs. For example Brooks mentions a demographic termed “towns and gowns” where recent college graduates cluster and are “big consumers of Dove Bars and Saturday Night Live” (69) or “tend to drive small foreign cars and to read Rolling Stone and Scientific American” (69). For occupants of this grouping, recognition of their fallacy between a self-prescribed diversity and their predictable similarities may create cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance, a theory introduced by Leon Festinger, is a psychological conflict resulting from simultaneously held incongruous beliefs and actions, such as a strong opinion for diversification and statistical proof of deliberate clustering.

According to Festinger, “Dissonance may be reduced by altering one of the dissonant cognitions by reducing the importance of the dissonance or by adding new information which is consonant with one the discrepant cognitions” (“cognitive dissonance,” Encyclopedia of Psychology, Volume One). In other words, perhaps you agree with the concept of equality among men and upon walking down the street you notice a dilapidated man on the street corner. As you pass by he asks you about your day and embarrassingly you dodge the foul breathed inquiry while hastening your steps. In such an instance you have developed an incongruent action opposed to your saintly belief. In order to justify your reaction and absolve the discrepancy you must either diminish the concept of equality or create additional information to rationalize your actions. Perhaps you disqualify his question as genuine or confidently conclude that he contained ulterior motives, either way you have produced a half-truth to silence personal discomfort. Individuals thrive on these sporadic justifications to overthrow moral discomfort, allow moral ideals to seem achievable, and maintain cognitive consistency.

Moral ideals are paramount to general concepts. By providing an ethereal standard we, as individuals, strive toward a perfection unbecoming of our primitive selves. When we are born into this world we are wrought without preconceived notions and lofty ideals. In the earliest stages of cognition we construct reality into measurements of existing objects: the room is big, the sky is blue, Daddy has two eyes, etc. We constrict knowledge into general data and accept all things by appearance. In Ayn Rand’s *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* she states, “The first words a child learns are words denoting visual objects, and he retains his first concepts visually. Observe that the visual form he gives them is reduced to those essentials which distinguish the particular kind of entities from all others ...” (15).

As time progresses abstractions develop and in order to frame existents as reality we must begin to classify newly introduced information. The human mind, though highly advanced, struggles in processing large quantities of information directly; it must first measure, classify, and label data into segments. We naturally begin grouping information and reality into distinct categories where “a concept is a mental integration of two or more units which are isolated according to a specific

characteristic(s) and united by a specific definition” (Rand 11). The integration or clustering of multiple data sets, from a young age, begins our natural route away from diversity. Ayn Rand conceives this as “the goal and task of bringing the universe within the range of man’s knowledge-by identifying relationships to perceptual data” (17). Thus to even begin to form the concept of diversity we as humans must separate the ethnicities, the religions, the appearance, and any other diverse measurement into partitioned sections. Only after mental homogenization can we establish the definition of “variety.” How then can we shake a finger at our consciousness when the very deconstruction of the ideal crucially bestows its definition?

Moreover if diversity represents an abstract concept and is based solely on the realm of an ideal, then it follows that we, merely flawed humans, can never attain pure diversity. Plato long ago believed “that we should be in error if we attributed properties to sensible things absolutely. A thing is beautiful, heavy, good only in relation to other things; hence, Plato concludes, nothing is really beautiful, heavy, or good except the standards of heaviness, beauty, and goodness themselves, and they cannot be sensible things (Knowledge and sense perception, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume 3).” Diversity is shrouded by the same malleable definition that goodness or beauty creates, which is an ideal based only in relation to man’s pre-formed concept. In this case “diversity” arises with multiple meanings and transforms its definition into a formula to which specific surroundings or examples are substituted. If the examples are broad the diversity covers an immense array, however if the examples are minute then diversity microscopically creates a narrower but clearer picture of itself. In this way should we not focus more thoroughly on the singular individual? Should not diversity, as elusive as it is, be considered by the individual themselves, and not massively applied to large unresponsive populations?

David Brooks’s error unfolds before us; by judging a consortium without clearly defined parameters he ignores the primitive process of sectioning and coagulating like properties. Although in his defense he concludes, “It’s probably better to think about diverse lives, not diverse institutions” (71). In this manner the definition of applied diversity belongs to the life of the individual: to his own travels, his own concepts, and his own actions. The attempt to create a life of diverse proportion is sufficient enough. Nobody can be perfect; we all fall short.

It does not matter if you are white, or grew up in poverty, or practice ancient religious rituals, or you buy only in style clothes. Who cares that you can be marketed by population, age, and probable demeanor, your individually compiled perception of variety is diversity. The antithesis of accepting diversity is ignorance, and in this case ignorance is voluntary. A personal biological timeline and any supererogatory attempts to include other variants remain satisfactory enough. So the next time you see a black man, a priest, a republican, a Dutchman, a feminist, a hippy, and a paraplegic waiting at a bus stop ... create your own punch-line.

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## Winding Exploration

*Kathy R. Tavia*

*Written for Professor Earle's English 101*

Kathy's areas of interest at TCC are English and journalism. She would like to be an English writing and language teacher and perhaps a freelance travel journalist.

Kathy thought "it was a bit of a challenge to write a paper without trying to write to convince." She encourages writers to let their thoughts flow through freewriting, and "never doubt yourself."

She patiently waited by the dining table after preparing a great feast of a breakfast for her two sons and husband. She stood in a beautiful, yellow spring dress with one hand overlapping the other while holding a perfect grin on her face. Pearly whites were outlined by red lips and glowing skin that was lightly light by the sparkles in her eyes. The boys and husband-accordingly-made it down the steps to enjoy their finely fixed meal. The family had outrageous smiles and ridiculous laughs as if there was no wrong in the world. Why did I watch families like this one on television so much? Was I jealous, because I longed for a perfect family too? I channel surfed all day long in hopes that one day I would find a family of my own. These ideal family images were how I viewed family before, but now I am left discovering family for myself: my parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. I just briefly described my family in a list so does that mean family is a group of people? Can family ever be one person or thing?

"I'm my own family," I softly whispered into my father's ear as he was saying goodbye to me. He was leaving his home to be with his other family -- his other so called wife and son -- but in the end told me I was HIS family. How could that be? Family sticks together. If not, then maybe he was still family after all. He was selfish or maybe I was, too. I wanted him to be in my life and just love me, not my half brother! Is egocentrism part of what makes a family? I'm sure someone is always seeking attention and love from a relative. Is family a group of people that give each other love and attention and accepts everyone as they are? Well, my father did not satisfy my ego, but my mother did.

My mother, a strong-willed Cuban woman, was the source for my attention. She supported my feelings, thoughts, and emotions growing up even if they were mean or offensive. One of the things she didn't support was speaking about bad feelings towards family. Why can't I talk bad about family? What makes them different from my friends or even strangers? Many of these questions came to mind, and so I asked my mother myself. "Family is the people who are always going to be there for you, so of course you cannot speak conniving things about them. They are your blood," she replied; I did not understand.

They are my blood? My best friend Christy is not my blood. We have been friends for years, and I could never imagine not ever calling her family. Why do I call her family though? Is it because she holds my many secrets and fears? Maybe it's because she relates to me and supports me through good and bad? She is not blood, but she is family; so does that make my mom wrong? I guess blood might not necessarily make someone your family, but then again it does. I, for instance, would not accept my father as family since his separation from me but many would agree that he is still my family. That changes what I think family is: it's not only people who know everything about you and care for you but can be strangers, too.

Can strangers be family? This idea seems eccentric but maybe true. Why can't strangers be family? They may not know everything about me or if I exist even, but instincts would bring me to help a stranger in need; for instance, if I heard someone screaming for help, I would run to their rescue. Why would I do that though? Why should I even care? That person does not know me: my hopes, my fears, my strengths, my love for travel, my sisters, my achievements, etc. The person in need of help may not know any of these things, but still I am there for them with no hesitation; isn't that deed what family does? I am part of this human species and act-by instincts-to protect my kind; my kind IS my family. Strangers are a part of me.

How about pets, though? They are not the same species I am nor can they communicate verbally with me, but I still dearly care for them: Chino Moreno -- whom I loved -- was such a great pet before he died. I remember first receiving him at the mall from a woman with a box full of labradors; this woman saw the connection between Chino and me and so let me have him for free. I cared for him so much as if he was a child; Chino was MY child. I bathed, fed, played, and taught him tricks like a parent. How could I have possibly considered a dog to be family? I felt the same way with Chino like I felt with my mother: safe, supported, cared about, loved, and part of a friendship. Chino, in turn, was a parent to me, too.

So then what is family? Will I ever have one true statement for family? I seem to consider everyone in my life as family: relatives, friends, outsiders, animals, and even enemies. I should then also look at the world like family as in plants, oceans, lands, and skies: plants allow me to breathe, water keeps my body efficiently running, the land gives me the foundation for planting food, and the sky keeps me protected and keeps me dreaming of the rest of the other worlds scrambled and continuously active out there in space; my other families, maybe? Family is, in the end, people or things in my life that give me a reason to move forward in life and make me feel like I am part of something greater than myself: an invisible but permanent bond.



## Let Them Eat Cake (and Wear Designer Jeans)

*Katlin Moore*

*Written for Professor Fox's English 101*

Katlin is majoring in advertising with a focus in public relations. She has been accepted to Loyola University, Chicago, where she will finish her degree. After she is done with school she would like to move to Ireland for a time before settling in Seattle. Her greatest struggle was life; she had trouble taking her attention from her chaotic schedule to focus on writing the paper. Her advice is "simply to write, write as often as you can about anything you can."

Somewhere a corporate advertiser is tugging at invisible marionette strings. Somewhere an unwitting consumer is doing exactly what the advertiser wants. Many images and messages are encoded in our heads from a very early age. The media begins with young girls and makes them believe that women should be thin. There is a message that consumers cannot help but see; it says, "If you use a certain product, you will become the spokesperson." Starting at an early age the media has an extraordinary influence on body perception.

The media tells consumers what and who to be. In his essay "The Cult You're In," Kalle Lasn writes, "Ah Liv, who when you first saw her spraying Opium on her wrist at the cosmetics counter reminded you so much of Cindy Crawford -- though of late she's put on a few pounds and now looks better when you close your eyes and imagine" (Lasn). She looks like a super model when she is using the perfume, but afterwards, she is just a normal girl. This is an amazing let down for the average man. He is expecting her to always be the girl he met. This may explain some of the pressures on women to stay thin. Lasn is describing how our society is critical of women in particular. If a woman happens to gain a few pounds it is common to hear a person say that she has let herself go. The media perpetuates this practice by consistently using images of thin, beautiful, young girls to sell things from dish soap to make up. Brooke Shields, who is tall and thin with a gorgeous smile, sells toothpaste. Kate Moss glamorizes modern drug culture. The public will see these images and constantly compare themselves and society in general to them.

It hurts to be beautiful and she is beautiful. She smiles at the world from the cover of magazines and billboards. Her skin radiantly glows, her shiny hair is perfectly styled, her make up is flawlessly applied, and she is desperately thin. Every designer is dying to get her in his or her clothes. Every man is dying to get her in his bed. She is the ideal: the image that all other women are held to. What her adoring public never sees is how she clutches her stomach as she quietly vomits into the toilet. She is naked; there are no designer clothes to cover her sharp curves. Her hair is pulled back and her makeup is probably gone. At that angle each of her vertebrae stick out like medieval armor. Her shoulders are nothing but skin stretched over bone. Suddenly she doesn't seem so perfect. She seems sick. She is so obsessed with her beauty that she resorts to hurting herself for the sake of perfection. This is one of the

spoof ads on Lasn's website *adbusters.org* (adbusters). To complete this horrifying image Lasn added the tag line "Obsession for Women." The obsession is to be thin, at any cost. The obsession can manifest itself in the form of diet, over-exercise, pills, eating disorders; whatever it takes. Every day young women are inundated with images of fashion's true victims: those that are endangering their health, relationships, and possibly lives to be the ideal. This is a cultural epidemic.

A culture is very sick if all its members want the same things. Lasn asks, "What does it mean when a whole culture dreams the same dream?" (Lasn). He is asking the possible outcome although he is not optimistic about the answer. Lasn does not like the concept of a whole culture dreaming the same dream. This is because the lack of individuality creates a completely homogenized and boring culture. There is nothing unique to aspire to. With time the dreams become shallow and empty and there is nothing left to work for. The dreams can be detrimental to the members of the culture. If every woman is dreaming that she were thin the outcome is the perpetuation of the harmful practices. However, women are not the only ones who are affected by the media. Men can feel inadequate in the eyes of society as well.

He is a good-looking man with a great looking body. His arms are large and strong and his abdominal muscles are defined even when he is not flexing. He is tall and dark with large capable hands. His hair is styled in the latest fashion. He projects confidence with every word and every move. It is not hard to imagine this man wearing an expensive suit while giving an order in a high power boardroom. He is a man that commands attention and respect as he walks down the street. Yet under the confident veneer this man has a crippling fear. He is terrified to take his clothes off with the lights on even in front of his long-term girlfriend. She is puzzled that he showers with the door locked. Once he is behind the locked door, he pulls out front of his designer underwear to study the source of his insecurity. He instantly hates himself and the expression on his face betrays his feelings. He feels, like so many men, that he is sexually ill equipped and also that he is inadequate in the eyes of society. The tagline for this spoof ad is "Obsession For Men" (ad busters). Lasn is making the point that there are more important things to obsess over than sexual adequacy. Men in our society are expected to be strong, capable, and in control. For some twisted reason, these things are all tied to penile size or lack thereof. There is constant speculation and reference to this biological detail. If a man is lacking, he is less of a man in our society.

The media plays a very large role in influencing how a person feels about his or her body, as well as the bodies of others. We are trained from an early age to believe that to be accepted by society we must fit in to the ideal appearance. More important than family, education, or nearly anything else is the notion of beauty. Vapid, shallow, or cruel people are excused from their short comings if they are aesthetically pleasing. Our culture uses unhealthy ideas and extremes as the cultural ideal. Women must be thin yet soft and men must be obviously physically manly. The ever-so-respected media is raising an army of easily influenced, deathly thin zombies.

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## Shakespeare of Harlem

*Michael Biddle*

*Written for Professor Braden's English 103*

Michael is pursuing a transfer degree at TCC and would like to major in journalism. His latest aspirations are to become a journalist in the fields of either motorcycling, food and wine, or travel. One of Michael's biggest struggles with writing "Shakespeare of Harlem" was organizing all the information he had. Michael advises other student writers to not take criticism too harshly.

"Let America be America again.  
 Let it be the dream it used to be.  
 Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
 Seeking a home where he himself is free.  
 (America never was America to me.)  
 Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed-  
 Let it be that great strong land of love  
 Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
 That any man be crushed by one above" (Hughes 3).

These words are the first two stanzas of one of the most famous poems written by Langston Hughes titled "Let America Be America Again." Born in 1902, Hughes experienced World War I, the roaring twenties, the depression of the thirties, World War II, and the rise of the beat culture in the fifties before his death from cancer in 1967. These experiences, along with his travels around the world, would prove to be a large influence on his writing and his perspective on African American culture. Being African American in this time period also made life difficult because, despite slavery being abolished nearly half a century ago, black people in America throughout the first half of the twentieth century were still greatly looked down upon, especially in the South. That is what people are reminded of most when they think about African American people in the first half of the twentieth century. However, in the northern states, mainly New York, black people were beginning to find their voice. The 1920's spawned a movement that was at first called the "New Negro Movement" and later renamed the "Harlem Renaissance." Its largest influence was in the 20's and into the depression, but the cultural effects of the Harlem Renaissance could be seen till some time into the 1940's and arguably, even later than that. Langston Hughes was one of the most famous writers to emerge in this period known as the Harlem Renaissance and became the unofficial voice of this movement because of his bluesy, song-like writing style that appealed to African Americans. To be able to understand the impact of this movement on Langston Hughes and his writing, and Hughes's impact on the movement, the period of the Harlem Renaissance must first be discussed.

Between 1915 and 1920, an area north of New York City known as Harlem was being bought up by middle class African American families and churches. This was the first emergence of a dominantly African American community in a northern city. There were, of course, black communities before this period but they were all in the southern states where an African-American was unable to gain enough of a foothold in their social status to really create something. The cities in the north were much more open to the idea of letting an African-American community flourish. By the early 1920's, Harlem became a place of mass migration for African-American people, mostly from the South, but also from all over the country, that wanted to escape racism. One thing that history has taught us, is when a massive amount of people come together with something in common, change can happen, and any black person that migrated to Harlem in the twenties, it is safe to say, was trying to escape hardship and gain a sense of equality and stability in their lives. After migrating north to Harlem, these people were brought together to tell their stories and openly express their feelings of grief, despair, rage, and any other feelings they may have had towards their own past and the past of the African-American people before them. From this common bond, an artistic culture emerged that was based on these hardships. It was a culture that was dominated by the arts in every sense of the word. Mainstream public started to see African-American dancers, poets, novelists and musicians. Musicians and writers gained the most fame for their work and were actually able to make a living. It was also during this period that the genre of Jazz was popularized because in the north it was more widely accepted by mainstream America. Jazz musicians such as Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong became famous for their contributions to the Harlem Renaissance through jazz music. Female singers, such as Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith were also making great contributions to jazz and blues music. Writers such as Langston Hughes, perhaps the most well known Harlem Renaissance writer, and Countee Cullen were getting their work published and were performing their poetry in public. Their poetry was unique in that it made more sense performed in front of an audience than it did being read on a page. One could argue that that observation is also true of Shakespeare's work and Hughes has been referred to many times as the "Shakespeare of Harlem." This style made the two art forms of music and poetry closely connected. For example, in Langston Hughes's poem "Dream Boogie", he writes:

"What's written down  
 For white folks  
 Ain't for us a-tall  
 Liberty and justice-huh-for all.  
 Oop-pop-a-da!  
 Skee! Daddle-de-do!  
 Be-bop!" (Hughes 732).

When people simply read these words on a page, they don't make a lot of sense, but if they were to be performed in front of them on a stage, the words which are meant to mimic musical sound, would compliment the poem with jazzy tones and a more up-beat feeling. Hughes also wrote poems with the same lyrical pattern as most blues songs of the time. Robert DiYanni describes it as, "This

stanza includes two nearly identical lines followed by a third that contrasts with the first two” (DiYanni 720). An example of this can be seen in one of Hughes’s most well known poems, “The Weary Blues.” In the poem Hughes writes:

“He did a lazy sway....  
 He did a lazy sway....  
 To the tune of those weary blues” (Braziller 87).

This shows a perfect example of how the poets of the Harlem Renaissance imitated blues song writing.

Langston Hughes’s influences were not typical, to say the least, for quite a few reasons. First of all he was an African-American, and in early 1900’s mainstream America, just being African-American assured a not-so-typical childhood. He was born in Missouri which isn’t the “deep south” by any means, but certainly has a southern way of life. Just by being from a southern state meant that most likely his family would be poor and would face racism often. His parents split up and his father moved to Mexico City. It seemed Mexico was a place where an African-American could actually make a living and even acquire a bit of wealth. For a time, Hughes also lived in Mexico with his father and that really seemed to give him a sense of racial pride since white people were certainly the minority there. In one of Hughes’s poems titled “My People,” he writes:

“The night is beautiful,  
 So the faces of my people  
 The stars are beautiful,  
 So the eyes of my people  
 Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
 Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people” (Hughes 727).

Throughout Hughes’s childhood he traveled around quite a bit because his mother and stepfather were forced to move around to find employment. The different places also added to Hughes’s influences; places with great culture like Illinois, Ohio, and Kansas. After high-school, Hughes went to Mexico to spend a year with his father, and that trip seemed to have a huge impact on his writing because soon after that, his writing began to get published. On the train ride to Mexico, Hughes wrote his first poem that would be published titled, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” In the poem he makes reference to Rivers in Africa and America. He writes:

“I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young  
 I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep  
 I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it  
 I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln  
 Went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy  
 Bosom turn all golden in the sunset....  
 My soul has grown deep like the rivers”(Hughes 725).

What he is saying in this poem is that, because he has moved around so much and seen so many different things, his soul has become deep just like the biggest rivers in the world. He is also speaking of the bond that links all African-Americans to each other and to their ancestors. Hughes may or may not have actually seen the Euphrates, the Congo and the Nile at the time this poem was written, but he feels strongly that a part of him was there because his ancestors certainly were.

Hughes and his father didn't quite see eye to eye about Hughes's future so after a year in Mexico, Hughes returned to the states. However, not before his father agreed to pay his tuition to Columbia University in New York. This was a great privilege because being an African-American and getting to go to college in the 1920's was almost unheard of. In a poem titled "Theme for English B," Hughes makes reference to being the only African American in his class.

Although he only stayed at Columbia for one year, the things he saw in New York had a lasting impact on him and he would return many times. After that year at Columbia, Hughes was able to travel abroad and explore other parts of the world. He spent a lot of time visiting the various port cities in Africa, and spent a lot of time in Italy, France, and even Russia. During his travels he wrote many poems and short stories that were influenced by his experiences. In 1926, Hughes returned to Harlem and began spending almost all of his time in jazz and blues clubs writing poems and stories. A lot of the subjects in Hughes's poetry and short stories came from this time spent in Harlem in the twenties. He also took experiences from other people that had come to Harlem and turned them into poetry. For example in the poem "Young Gal's Blues" he writes in the first stanza:

"I'm gonna walk to the graveyard  
 'hind my good friend Cora Lee.  
 Gonna walk to the grave yard  
 'hind my good friend Cora Lee.  
 Cause when I'm dead some  
 body'll have to walk behind me"(Hughes 729).

This poem again shows the way Hughes would write poetry in the form of a blues song, and that is the way that Langston Hughes intended it. He was writing about the feelings and experiences of African-Americans, for African-Americans because blues music is what they could most easily identify with at the time.

There were, however, a few critics that frowned upon this writing style saying that his imitations of blues in this way, were not exactly poetry. Some thought that Hughes was simply writing songs and not real, meaningful poetry. I suppose many actual jazz and blues musicians may have thought that Langston Hughes was trying to be something that he wasn't. Overall, Hughes's poetry was celebrated and accepted into mainstream culture. Most of the time Hughes would just sit in jazz clubs and listen and watch the musicians and wait for inspiration to come from the music like the poem "trumpet player":

“The Negro  
 With the trumpet at his lips  
 Has dark moons of weariness  
 Beneath his eyes  
 Where the smoldering memory  
 Of slave ships  
 Blazed to the crack of whips  
 About his thighs” (Hughes 730).

Again Hughes is drawing from common elements of all the people in Harlem at the time. They all dearly loved the jazz players and they all knew something about slavery and racism. The Impact of Langston Hughes’s work and of the Harlem Renaissance can be seen through out the twentieth century and even today. It popularized jazz music and made it possible for future musicians like Ray Charles and B. B. King to create music. The female vocalists of the time like Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith made it possible for singers like Janis Joplin and Aretha Franklin to create music years later. Poets like Langston Hughes made it possible for people like Allen Ginsberg to push the boundaries and create the poetry of the beat generation. In 2000, a poem by Kevin Young titled “Langston Hughes” was published as an ode to the great writer. It is written in the same blues style as Hughes’s poetry and in the poem the writer refers to Hughes as “Mr. Shakespeare in Harlem” (Young 741). The writer also references works by Hughes such as “the weary Blues” and “Theme for English B.” Senator John Kerry even used words from Hughes’s poem “Let America be America Again” in his 2004 campaign for president and he provides the preface for the latest edition of *Let America Be America Again- And Other Poems*. In it he writes: “It was in that climate [the depression] that Langston Hughes, black America’s unofficial poet laureate, wrote his powerful poetic lament, ‘Let America Be America Again’. While it is the litany of the great promise of opportunity that has drawn so many of the world’s disaffected to our shores, the poem is also a call to make that promise real for all Americans—especially for the descendants of slaves” (Kerry VIII). Although Langston Hughes died in 1967, his writing still serves as a voice of strength and courage to everyone.

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## Substance Abuse Among Nurses

*Rachael Warren*

*Written for Professor Bonnell's Nursing 211*

Rachael is majoring in nursing at TCC. She will be pursuing her bachelor's degree in nursing at University of Washington Tacoma in Spring 2009. Writing her essay, Rachael struggled with combining all the information into a format that was easy to read, yet maintaining a college-level style. Her advice for other student writers is to just sit down and get started, build a beginning foundation, and it will all come together.

The prevalence of substance abuse among nurses is rising and continues to rise. Substance abuse does not discriminate across gender, age, or socio-economic status. However, some types of substance abuse are more prevalent among particular groups. The American Nurses' Association (ANA, 2002) estimates that six to eight percent of nurses use alcohol or other drugs to the extent that they impair their professional performance (ANA, 2002). It is important for all nurses to be aware that drug abuse exists among nurses. It is important for all nurses to know the proper steps to assist their co-workers in getting the support they need.

Some startling recent statistics show that in the United States, problems in productivity and employment among individuals with a history of substance abuse cost the American economy \$80.9 billion. Of this, \$66.7 billion is attributed to alcohol and \$14.2 billion to other drugs (National Institute of Health, 2003). Of course, this does not include the emotional costs to families and individuals such as divorce, alcohol, and drug-related domestic and child abuse, and automobile injuries. One out of every ten nurses has engaged in substance abuse and this is a definite problem for the nursing community.

A great strategy for combating substance abuse is being aware of the signs of drug abuse; new nurses can be better equipped to take action against an ever-growing issue. An additional strategy is knowledge of factors that contribute to drug abuse among nurses. Finally, learning, early on, how to manage one's own stress level can greatly decrease the pervasiveness of drug abuse in the nursing community.

The majority of nurses who receive treatment for problems related to chemical abuse became addicted as students; they were academically in the top third of their class. A majority hold advanced degrees. It has been estimated that approximately ten percent of nurses are chemically impaired; most disciplinary problems that are addressed by Boards of Nursing are related to nurses in this ten percent (Uris, 2002).

An interesting question is why nurses who are aware of other nurses' substance abuse problems choose not to report the abuse or find themselves unable to intervene. Friendship acts as a barrier to recognizing and addressing deviant nursing practice. Friendships makes it is easy to look the other way

and deny that a problem exists. Loyalty can be a major obstacle to reporting incompetence, particularly in departments that have a strong team spirit. Many co-workers observe perilous nursing behaviors but are hesitant to report nurses with whom they work closely and whose personal and professional concerns they understand.

Nurses should be educated on the signs and symptoms of substance abuse among their peers. It is important for all nurses to be aware of signs and symptoms of substance abuse, such as, mood swings, diminished alertness, increasing forgetfulness, defensiveness, and decreased concentration. Inconsistent signs of withdrawal can include impaired cognition, and isolation or withdrawal from colleagues. Substance abuse issues in nursing usually are first noted by staff members. Whether a staff nurse acts on his or her knowledge or chooses to remain silent, directly affects patient care, safety and the reputation of the institution. It also ultimately affects the impaired colleague's level of functioning (Dunn, 2005). By the time a nurse demonstrates negative or inappropriate work habits, the problem already has reached a serious stage.

It is advantageous for institutions to create systems that allow track and report substance abuse incidents, provide education and support to help nurses participate in rehabilitation and avoid placing patients in harm's way (Blair, 2003).

Behaviors to watch for are varied work attendance, such as sporadic absences, a day at a time, and usually on a Friday or Monday; and appearance -- take note of a nurse who shows a sudden dramatic change in her personal grooming. Affect -- watch for disturbing shifts in a nurse's personal traits, facial expressions, voice, posture, and gestures. An outgoing nurse may suddenly become stone-faced and uncommunicative. Lastly, pay attention to any changes in a nurse's attitude toward work. A staff member noted for his/her efficiency may suddenly begin taking longer to complete tasks. Listen closely to patients' complaints; a neglectful nurse may have a drug or alcohol problem. The following is an example demonstrates how knowledgeable impaired nurses are about their addiction habits.

Alexander note, "More than 15 years of my life are a blur I remember only a few landmarks through the fog of alcohol, cocaine, dilaudid, demerol, heroin, and other drugs. I was in and out of psychiatric units and drug treatment programs. I cycled through a dozen or so boyfriends. For extra money, I waited on tables or tended bar. But mostly I worked in hospitals as a nurse. Yes, I took vital signs, changed dressings, gave medications, and charted — the same things you do every day. Many of the drugs I used came from the medication cabinets of some very well run hospitals. But no one ever confronted me about my addiction. It is easy for an impaired nurse to "hide." I preferred to work the night shift, when staffing was minimal and there were no supervisors or visitors around. I also liked neurosurgery units; patients with head or spinal cord injuries were less likely to complain about taking a p.r.n medication. The final turn of events came one night when I told a patient with a spinal cord injury he needed medication he didn't want. I gave myself the Demerol, and then tried to give him sterile water. He refused it, so I put the syringe back in the drawer. Apparently, my nurse-manager suspected me because as soon as I put the syringe in the drawer, she confiscated it. I knew she would fire me once she found out it contained only water, so I quit. I participated in group meetings with other recovering doctors and nurses. That was one of the toughest parts of treatment. I told them I

felt good about the work I had done as a nurse. Immediately, they confronted me, pointing out that I could not be an addicted nurse and a good nurse at the same time. I was surprised by their frankness. They knew about lying to yourself, and they knew that only friends who cared enough to be tough and honest could break through that denial. My recovery has not been easy. I have not made it without stumbling but I wanted to live my life without taking drugs — and I have reached that goal. Today, I counsel adolescents at the treatment center that helped me recover. It is the best job I have ever had. Now I am grateful that I have the chance to give back some of what I have been given. That is one reason I am telling my story. If you have a problem with drugs or alcohol, you can get help. Recovery is not easy, but it is worth the price” (Alexander 2005).

Being aware of signs and symptoms is important; however being aware of factors that contribute to substance abuse is another important step in understanding its prevalence. Some of the factors identified as contributing to substance abuse are psychological or physical pain, emotional problems, a demanding high-pressure and stressful work environment, and family problems. Additional factors that have been known to contribute are previous emotional or mental health problems, family members with chemical dependency, depression, anxiety, or mental, emotional, or sexual abuse (George, 2003).

Some recent studies have shown that nurses who work in oncology have overall high substance use rates. One theory for this behavior is that controlled substances serve as a coping mechanism to help nurses distance themselves from the emotional pain they may experience while working with dying patients (Dunn, 2005).

Psychiatric nurses also experience high levels of substance use. Nurses working in psychiatric areas may consider self-medication more acceptable because they work in a culture that accepts using psychotropic medications to cope with life (Anderson, 2004). Additionally, psychiatric nurses may be more willing to report their use of substances than other specialty nurses because they perceive this as an acceptable form of treatment.

Pediatric and women's health nurses report the lowest use of addictive substances. This could be due to the lack of availability of these substances on their units, or it could be that this population of nurses is emotionally expressive (National Institute of Health, 2003). People who are able to express their feelings may have less need for substance use. There are some drawbacks to listing or categorizing all the contributing factors. Nurses might tend to think that anyone that demonstrates some of these factors is suspect for substance abuse. The result or outcome may be a lack of trust in their colleague. This turn may bring down the units' trust and moral (Ponech, 2005). Health care professionals are more unsympathetic and penalizing toward colleagues who abuse substances than they are toward others in the general population. Health care professionals are perceived to be highly educated, responsible people who have earned a position of trust with patients and patients' family members. Non-substance abusing nurses often have moralistic, stereotypical, and pessimistic views about addiction. One explanation for this harsh view is that nurses expect perfection from themselves and their coworkers because they hold patients' lives in their hands. One survey found that nurses perceive individuals who have substance abuse problems as immoral and as having character defects with low

probability of recovery (George, 2003). Nurses who have substance abuse problems, therefore, carry the stigma associated with this breach in professionalism.

Nurses are at risk for drug abuse because of the availability of medications in the workplace and the cultural acceptance within nursing that pharmacologic agents provide a desirable method to cure one's ills. Health care provides a permissible climate in which to use exogenous substances to correct internal feelings or illnesses. Nurses have been taught that medications solve problems. They have seen medications alleviate pain, cure infections, and diminish anxiety. Not only are prescription medications accessible, but nurses also have a mistaken belief about their personal skills and their level of knowledge to self-medicate without becoming addicted.

Self-medicating behaviors are viewed as inappropriate only when the magnitude and regularity of these behaviors increases. Access creates a familiarity with controlled substances that can increase the likelihood that nurses will use them on their own. Nurses may erroneously believe that they have the ability to control and monitor their own use of medications because of their experience administering medications and observing the effects on patients. Some nurses "believe that they are immune to the negative consequences of drug use because they are so familiar with drugs" (Dunn, 2005). Additionally, nurses that may have contributing factors, or who are at high risk for substance abuse may feel that they are being targeted or looked down on by their nursing peers. This can discourage them from asking for help. It can or cause them to feel estranged from the team because they do not feel comfortable discussing their personal life with any of their co-workers. The result can be depression and feelings of inadequacy in their careers (ANA, 2002).

Recognizing that substance abuse is a medical illness that requires treatment is the first step in removing the stigma associated with it. Current philosophies of the ANA and boards of nursing support helping addicted nurses seek treatment and rehabilitation to become productive members of society and nurses again. Communication and information-sharing are paramount for this process to be effective. A nurse who is suspected of abusing substances should be reported. It is the emotional aspect that undermines the reporting process. Being fearful that a colleague may lose his or her job or terminate a friendship are powerful motivators to withhold or dismiss anecdotal or subjective information. As social beings, people are motivated by emotions; the ability of nurses to report a colleague would be less belated, however, if a nurse who was impaired was caring for one of their loved ones. As patient advocates, this is the level of nursing at which all nurses should practice.

Learning the signs and symptoms and knowledge about contributing factors are great ways to decrease the prevalence of substance abuse. Increasing education about management of stress levels is another strategy that can help reduce substance abuse in the workplace. Stress provides another explanation for why some nurses abuse substances. Increased workloads, decreased staffing, double shifts, mandatory overtime, rotating shifts, and floating to unfamiliar units all contribute to feelings of isolation, fatigue, and, ultimately, stress (Ponech, 2005).

Each person feels stress and handles it in different way. Learning early on, how to effectively manage stress can be extremely beneficial in finding alternative ways to decrease it. Chronic stress can

result in increased sensitivity and cause one to be more susceptible to the effects of stress. Research indicates that stress actually alters physical patterns in our brain. If left unmanaged the result can be the use of substance abuse to decrease it (Anderson, 2004). Stress causes the release of a hormone called cortisol. Without cortisol, you would die – but too much cortisol can be harmful to the brain. The cortisol released into the brain during times of stress travels and binds to the receptors inside many neurons in the cytoplasm. Through an inundation of reactions, this causes neurons to admit more calcium through channels in their membrane (Your Amazing Brain, 2008). In the short-term, cortisol presumably helps the brain to cope with the life-threatening situation; however, if neurons become over-loaded with calcium they fire too frequently and die – they are literally excited to death (Your Amazing Brain, 2008). Cortisol seems it makes your brain more vulnerable to damage such as strokes, ageing and stressful events.

Some common signs of stress that may lead to substance abuse are changes in appetite, changes in sleep habits, changes in behaviors such as, twitching, fiddling, talking too much, nail biting, teeth grinding, pacing, and other repetitive habits. There is also increased sickness due to a lowered immune system, frequent headaches, and constant feelings of being tired or worn out (Your Amazing Brain, 2008). To aid in learning how to decrease stress here are a few strategies. Practice good communication with family, friends, and co-workers. Exercise on a regular basis. Plan productive solutions to problems. Ask for support when feeling stressed out. Learn to set clear limits.

To combat the issue of substance abuse that imperils patients and gives rise to a bad reputation toward nurses, all nurses should be aware of the signs and symptoms. All nurses should strive for better communication in their homes and within the work place. They need to find out what will help them manage their stress levels. Then fervently practice those self-care techniques that will aid in the decrease of physical, emotional, and psychological stress. An increased awareness of danger signs can promote easier intervention with co-workers at risk. By being knowledgeable nurses can identify factors present in their own lives and can get help before those issues become uncontrolled.

Understanding how stress correlates with substance abuse, nurses can utilize alternative means to reduce stress in their life ultimately reduce the prevalence of substance abuse among the nursing community, and lastly, implement the concept that addiction is a definable medical illness. These actions are imperative to help remove the stigma associated with substance abuse and make it easier for nurses to seek treatment.

“Helping the impaired nurse is difficult, but not impossible.

The choices for action are varied.

The only choice that is clearly wrong is to do nothing.”

National Council of State Board of Nursing

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## MARRIAGE vs. MARRIAGE: Two Adversarial Institutions

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*Written for Professor Cochrane's Philosophy 215*

Robert's areas of interest at TCC are political science and public policy. His future plans are to go into teaching, later transitioning into either state or national-level politics. Robert's main struggle with writing his paper was finding a balance between length and the ability to convey his thoughts.

The issue of same-sex marriage is one of the issues that is so controversial and polarizing that even the two Democratic front runners for the presidential nomination do not have the issue listed on their campaign web sites. The philosophical arguments against gay marriage are mainly absolutist; framed as protecting the basic institution of marriage to protecting the moral foundation that our nation has been built upon. The pro-gay marriage lobby tries to advance the philosophical argument for gay marriage by framing the argument mainly as equivalent to the civil rights movements of the 1960's for racial and gender equality or by vilifying marriage in an attempt justify why gay marriage wouldn't do more damage to the traditional institution than already exists.

Opponents and proponents of same sex marriage tend to see marriage as a singular institution, other than separate sacred and secular institutions. By taking a step back and looking at this issue from two separate philosophical views, religious and civil, the contentious issues may be not become any less discordant for the extreme absolutist factions of each view, but perhaps it will demonstrate a more utilitarian and pluralist view for individuals who may seem enticed by both sides of the argument. After presenting a line of reasoning that will logically advance the premise that the same-sex marriage issue should be viewed as two separate issues, I will look at the issue from the secular perspective by first defining our U.S. Constitution and adjoined Amendments as our country's categorical Imperative. Then I will look at three of the major points of contention between the factions of the same-sex issue: One man-one woman, children, and recruitment between the factions of the same-sex issue. Within each issue I will raise the points and counter points of each lobby, and then give my take, which will vary immensely from the arguments made.

### **“We The People...”: Our National Categorical Imperative**

“Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...” These words, penned by Thomas Jefferson as part of the blue print of our Constitution, stipulate that our Constitutional government is created, legitimized, and sustained by our national society. All governments are instruments of a group of individuals who relinquish some amount of their individualism in order to provide stability for other rights they deem more important. The Declaration

of Independence outlines these important rights as Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. As voluntary citizens of this national society we have contracted with each other that our national moral code, or categorical imperative, will consist of only these inalienable rights and the rights protected by the Constitution.

### **Secular vs. Sacred**

Are we morally bound to allay religious institutions' anxiety that may occur from granting an equal civil right to a citizen of this country? The First Amendment guarantees the right to religious freedom, more explicitly the right to establish a religion and the freedom to exercise the beliefs and tenants of that religion. Does this infer that we are inextricably bound to avoid civil laws and institutions that directly contradict any religious laws? This type of approach would countermand the framers' of the Constitution intent to maintain what Jefferson called the wall of separation between church and state. Just as the "no religious test" clause in Article 6 Sect. 3 of the U.S. Constitution, the establishment clause is the framers desire to protect all religion. It is a pro-religion perspective, taken into context with the entire First Amendment, government must thoughtfully pass laws without infringing on the individual's right to believe, profess, compose, or exercise their personal religious beliefs. To successfully do this, government must make laws without bias toward any religion's beliefs, but construct laws and civil institutions that are based on our constitutions bias toward civil equality.

These civil laws may cause religious turmoil within certain sects, but as long as the civil law is not grounded on religious beliefs, instead on a foundation that the law or institution serves a purely secular interest, the laws will not infringe on the individual's first amendment rights. The law or institution must not establish an environment that infringes on the individual's right to address or exercise their religious beliefs. Tom Erich, an Episcopal Priest, sustains this idea in an article in the *Herald Sun*, "The Constitution doesn't exist to resolve religious disputes. It exists to provide a just and equitable environment of laws and rights in which citizens can address religious issues."

### **One Man – One Woman**

Many same-sex marriage opponents pose the argument that marriage is only for one man and one woman. In 1996 the Congress passed and President Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act that defined federally recognized marriage as a contract between one man and one woman. The anti same-sex marriage lobby had successfully convinced the public and their elected representatives that the sacred definition of marriage should become the legal secular definition of marriage.

The one man one woman argument is a reasonable argument on its face and affirms the necessity of DOMA with the premises that only a man and woman can procreate and that marriage is for the continuity of the human species. Continuity is an innate instinct within all organic species, so isn't it apropos that government creates laws that endorse this innate instinct?

Same-sex marriage proponents argue that current marriage laws do not contain a prerequisite of fertility or mandate procreation. Scott Bidstrup makes the point that if procreation is the reason for marriage then, "why [are] infertile couples allowed to marry...explain to his post menopausal mother or impotent father that since they cannot procreate, they must now surrender their wedding rings

and sleep in separate bedrooms.” Since marriage law does not contain a requirement of procreation, opponents of same-sex marriage cannot use procreation as a definitive function of marriage; therefore the one man one woman argument based on the premises aforementioned is unreasonable and the argument is false.

### *My Take*

The arguments of both of lobbies, anti and pro same-sex, are poignant, but neither really focuses on the moral code or categorical imperative our nation is built upon. It is unconstitutional to make laws that discriminate solely based on gender, race, or ethnicity without showing substantial reason why the law must discriminate along these identifiers. History, precedent, or tradition is not and cannot be held as substantial proof. The state must demonstrate why not discriminating will produce a clear and present danger to secular well being of the nation. If we accept laws that discriminate we cut away at a fundamental idea of our society.

### **Children**

In the landmark 1996 case *Baehr v. Miike*, the state of Hawaii defended its prohibition against same-sex marriage. In its defense, the state presented many professional witnesses. One of the state’s witnesses, Dr. Kyle Pruett, an expert in the field of psychiatry, specializing in child development, testified, according to court documents, that “biological parents have a predisposition which helps them in parenting”. We don’t need experts to tell us that the preeminent situation for any child is to have both biological parents participate fully in their rearing in a positive. One only needs to look at the appalling number of single parent, normally fatherless, homes within our floundering inner cities to make a correlation between the need for a strengthening of family structures to combat the increasing flaws in society. The optimal structure of the family is with a mother and father and opponents of same-sex marriage believe that it is in the best interest of our society if our laws support this structure. Maggie Gallagher, in her article titled “What Marriage Is For: Children Need Mothers and Fathers”, passionately challenges adoption of same-sex marriage laws stating that it would, “enshrine in law a public judgment that the desire of adults for families of choice outweighs the need of children for mothers and fathers.”

Hawaii’s witness Dr. Pruett, in the *Baehr v. Miike* case, when questioned by the plaintiffs’ attorney conceded “that parents’ sexual orientation does not disqualify them from being good, fit loving or successful parents.” Proponents of same-sex marriage first frame the anti same-sex lobby’s argument as an absolutist view that the only beneficial family structure for children is a traditional mother and father family. They counter this framed argument by presenting family and child experts who, like Dr. Pruett, grant that children can be raised successfully by various family structures. They also reason that if state law allows same-sex couples and homosexual adoption, it is hypocritical to base refusal of marriage licenses to same-sex couples because they do not provide a worthy structure to raise a child.

Both sides of the debate do agree on the premise that the best situation for children to be raised is with two loving parents and according to another the of State of Hawaii’s witnesses, Dr. Thomas Merrill, Ph.D., “[a] family in which there is a limited amount of strife, a maximum amount of

nurturing, a maximum amount of support, a maximum amount of guidance, a maximum amount of leadership, and a very strong and intimate bond between parents and child.” The divergence of ideas is if there is a singular or various forms of a beneficial family structure.

### *My Take*

The optimum environment for children is a red herring in the discussion of same-sex marriage. The belief that only one side of this debate is essentially against or more passionate about the well being of our children is a defective argument that is meant to distract from the thoughtful and philosophical variance by playing on the understandable feelings that individuals have when children are introduced into a scenario. Within our current secular laws, re: marriage, the ability to reproduce or raise children is not a mitigating factor. If either side persists on the stream of reasoning that uses children as a feature of civil marriage law, they will open a Pandora’s Box that could include more states adopting laws abolishing the right for same-sex couples and homosexuals to adopt children.

### **Recruitment**

Dr. James Dobson, a staunch opponent of same-sex marriage, in his book *Marriage Under Fire* alludes to his prediction that allowing same-sex marriage “will spread throughout the world, just as pornography did...America continues to be the fountainhead of filth and immorality, and its influence is global”. Allowing same-sex marriage will allow homosexuals to recruit individuals to their lifestyle. With adoption of laws legalizing same-sex marriage, homosexuals will demand that their lifestyle be taught within public schools systems in order to avoid discrimination. Again Dr. Dobson offers his view, “Textbooks, even in conservative states, will have to depict man/man and woman/woman relationships, and stories written for children as young as elementary school, or even kindergarten, will have to give equal space to homosexuals”.

Proponents of same-sex marriage often deny their desire to recruit. Scott Bidstrup, a political activist and gay advocate: “We don’t recruit because we know from our own experience that sexual orientation is inborn...So the notion that someone can be changed from straight to gay is unlikely.” Proponents feel that their struggle for marriage rights is not based on a future goal of growing the size of their gay society, but rather a struggle for rights guaranteed to 90% of the citizens of our nation.

Of the numerous arguments against same-sex marriage, the recruitment argument tends to receive weaker counter-argument from proponents. It may be because proponents find the premise obtuse or maybe they cannot find a strong enough counter-argument. The counter-argument equivalent to Bidstrup’s, the origin of sexual orientation, inborn or learned, is a weak counterpart to Dr. Dobson’s fear that children will be indoctrinated with a homosexual agenda within our public school systems.

### *My Take*

The ability to recruit, proselytize, and teach an individual’s beliefs has been interwoven throughout the history of our country and all religions and beliefs. Our ability to speak about our beliefs is protected by the First Amendment. If a gay individual or a religious surrogate chooses to use oratory to attempt

to persuade an individual on the perceived benefits of their life style, that is a right protected by the First Amendment. The individual who wishes to speak against the gay lifestyle or religious institutions has the same protected right, and within a public institution, both views must be presented with equal access or not presented at all. When society restricts what may be espoused, it doesn't just infringe on the right to expression, but it also dictates on how an individual must think.

## Conclusion

Both the pro and anti same-sex lobbies continue to vigorously attempt to advance their theories, but both rivaling camps are arguing vastly different issues. Until both sides settle on which institution of marriage, civil or religious, that they want to reform or protect the issue will only continue to be a divisive "political wedge issue" that will never be settled. My concern with the denial of equal marriage rights for any citizen of this nation is not based on sexual orientation. I am concerned by sanctioning discrimination against any individual based solely on opposition to a moral system or religious difference. Even the idea of "civil unions" offends me. The Supreme Court in 1954, in the historic *Brown vs. Board* case, held that separate was inherently unequal. Marriage holds a deep and personal meaning to many citizens of our society, including myself, and the significance that it holds is to each his own, and is not of importance to any other. If our governments are unable to sanction secular marriage for all citizens, indiscriminate of race, creed, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation, then they should all discontinue issuing marriage licenses and offer only civil or secular union licenses. The primary moral law or categorical imperative that we as citizens of this country have agreed to follow are those outlined by the Declaration of Independence and codified by the US Constitution. As a willing participant in this great societal experiment we call The United States of America, we have conceded that these ideals supersede our individual morals. It is these remarkable ideals, Life, Liberty, the Pursuit of Happiness, and Equality, that allow us to form, express, and exercise our individual morals. The social experiment of democracy will ultimately fail if we seceded from our societal pact, even with pure intentions to rectify society's moral compass. We must ensure equitable rights to all abiding members of our society, even those who may wander outside the moral logos.

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## Knowledge of Addiction

*Rosalee N. Cooke*

*Written for Professor Blair's English 101*

Rosalee is interested in TCC's nursing program. She plans to apply at Gig Harbor's St. Anthony's Hospital. Rosalee's main struggle in submitting her paper was revealing her personal life, but she hopes others will benefit from her writing. She encourages other student writers to "take a chance" and believes that everyone has something meaningful to write, even if it touches one person.

Experience, or a range of information, creates knowledge. Who better to educate you about addiction than a recovering alcoholic/addict? I am proud to say that I have gone eight years clean and sober. It was no picnic. This experience has given me the knowledge to help others and let them know there is hope. I attended a 28-day treatment program where every counselor was a recovering addict. They knew the emotional and, in some cases, physical pain that I was going through. That experience made it easier for me to open up and talk, because they felt my pain. These were not just counselors who had read and studied addiction. These counselors had lived my hell. There are many counselors who work with addiction, but how can someone who never experienced the roller coaster ride of addiction tell me to let go of my best friend? Alcohol and drugs were the one thing that never let me down and always made me feel better. So for now, and the rest of my life, I will live one day at a time; sometimes I live just one hour at a time. Remember sobriety is a continuous job, but a fulfilling one. I now have a wonderful husband, a happy and healthy five-year-old son, Braden, and two wonderful stepdaughters. If I was not clean and sober I would not be living the life I am today. I also would not be pursuing my dream of becoming a nurse.



## The Evil Laugh for Amateurs

*Sarah B. Sedgemore*

*Written for Professor White's English 101*

Sarah is majoring in nursing at TCC. She would eventually like to get a bachelor's in nursing and become a registered nurse. Sarah's main struggle with writing her paper was "limiting the geeky-ness, once I got started it was hard to reign it in so that I didn't go over length." Her advice to other student writers: "Write what you'd like to read."

As any self-respecting villain knows, an intimidating evil laugh is one of the most vital and difficult parts of the antagonist persona to cultivate. The first step to creating a fear-inspiring laugh is to honestly assess your voice and its capabilities. There is nothing more embarrassing than ending an evil monologue with a giggle because at the last minute you have realized that you cannot follow through. Secondly, consider exactly what persona to project with your laugh. One of the most debated features is the level of insanity to put into it. Remember that an overly-insane laugh may result in excessive force on the part of the hero. Next, rehearse your laugh, as this will make it sound more natural when the situation requires it. Begin practicing immediately; no self-respecting villain is caught doing evil without an evil laugh to match. Now let it rip! Laugh like you are about to be put into solitary confinement and this is your last moment to shine because, fellow evil doer, it just may be. Never underestimate the power of an evil laugh: nurture it and use it with conviction and your evil laugh will not fail.



## Woman Scorned

*Susan Walton*

*Written for Professor Braden's English 101*

Susan is majoring in early childhood education at TCC. Her career plans after college are to become a third- or fourth-grade teacher. In writing her essay, Susan struggled with cutting down her paper to the proper word count because she likes to write.

Susan encourages other student writers: "You will write better if you enjoy what you are writing about."

The mid-day sun was swiftly enveloped as the dark, brooding storm clouds thundered across the unsuspecting sky as a herd of cattle spooked into a stampede. From my lonely perch on the hill I watched the storm approach over the horizon. It trampled the Lord's Manor on the hill. Gathering intensity as it rolled over the village, it devoured the cathedral, its spires pointing toward heaven like a finger warning away a dog about to steal the last sausage around a campfire. The grass, not yet green from the harsh winter, was the shimmering golden mane of a wild horse running through the field. As the clouds overtook the bridge that covered the lazily crawling stream, the peasants rapidly gathered their belongings. Hastening to their homes, the wind hungrily grasped at the parcels they clutched to their bodies. Watching the clouds rise to overtake me, I could smell the rain on the winds before they collapsed around me. It was the sweet smell of spring and fresh cut grass, of air that has been oversaturated. Winds whipped around my flimsy shelter like a cross word from an angry trail boss as the storm gained momentum, thundering ever closer. The pine trees, jutting toward the sky, needles as sharp as fingernails on an old school house blackboard, groaned under the strain of the wind, an old man struggling to stand. As the first drops of rain started to splatter the countryside, I could see the last of the trailing people scatter, prairie dogs when the hawk is nearby, scurrying for the safety and shelter

of their homes. Lightning crashed across the sky above me in a blinding flash, a cattle dog trying to guide the herd back together. What seemed to have started out as a lazy spring storm developed into a full blown tavern brawl. The fierce wind picked up, resounding like a pack of coyotes at full bay, howling in mournful cry. Mother Nature, a jilted lover seeking revenge for crimes yet unknown, finally unleashed her full fury on the once peaceful countryside. There was little time to get indoors after the tantrum started, tree limbs and loose shingles being thrown all over the tavern as Mother Nature released her bitterness. The now angry river washed away the memory of the cowboy that left her with the torrent of rain that flooded the once meandering stream. Her anger faded as quickly as it erupted, the storm receding leaving once more the dark clouds lingering behind. The remnants of the storm, limbs, leaves and rubbish, were left strewn all over the countryside waiting to be picked up by the barmaids. The clouds, having been successfully herded back to a peaceful crawl across the sky, no longer needed the flash of lightning to guide their way. As I peered out my window, I could see peasants cautiously creeping out of their houses, not sure the hawk had really flown, to resume their everyday strife. Mother Nature, calm once more, lay in wait of her next tempest.

## Journal 1: Inspiration

*Anonymous*

*Written for Professor Hunt's English 95*

The author is attending TCC for an associate's degree in human services. Not only did she struggle with addiction at a young age, she was also a teen parent. She knows the difficulties that come from both and hopes someday she will be able to offer her life experiences as a helping tool for others in similiar situations. After college her goal is to open up transitional housing for teen parents. The hardest aspect of writing her paper was that she had not told many people of her addiction. She almost skipped the assignment because she was not sure if she could share her experiences with anyone. Although staff and students are very open at TCC, she was nervous about what judgments may be passed upon her from writing of her essay: "Addiction is a hard thing to overcome, and to tell a total stranger is even harder."

For someone to fully understand my day of inspiration, they would need to know a little of my background. At the age of fifteen, I started using methamphetamines. It was nothing big, I was just playing around, at least that is what I kept telling myself. I started off by smoking the meth only on the weekends, then three times a week, and soon I was smoking it every day. At age nineteen after my second child had been brought into the world, I started to shoot up meth. A total of six years went by, but I never considered myself to be an addict: I never sold off my things, I never used my bill money to go get high, and I never left my children unattended. They always had hot meals, they were bathed, and in clean clothing; I was not an addict.

One day in mid-May my moment of clarity came. I had taken my children over to play at their cousins' house; their aunt, who happened to be one of my using friends, had just gotten some really good shit (methamphetamines). When we arrived it was not unusual for her to tell me that I needed to powder my nose, meaning she had already fixed me a rig (hypodermic syringe), and it was waiting in a locked box in the bathroom. Grabbing the key I went upstairs to take my hit, then I would return to life as if nothing was going on. With the routine set in motion, the kids went out to play while we played cards on the patio in the backyard; however, I could tell that their aunt had been up for days, maybe even a little over a week, and as good as the shit was, she was still coming down. When someone is coming down, they lose themselves in a state of almost disillusion; they lose a sense of time, there is a personality change, and anything can send them over the edge.

Looking at her, I told her that she should go crash, and I would stay over a little longer to watch the kids. It was something we did for each other all the time. It had only been about twenty minutes when it began to rain, so I took the kids inside. They were being kids playing around, being a little

loud, but nothing over the top. She came running down the stairs, and screamed, "Shut up! I am trying to sleep!" I remember thinking to myself that she was having a really bad come-down, and asked the kids to play quietly while she slept. After another half hour, she came back down stairs, telling me that she just could not sleep and would crash later that night. Everything was going good; we had just finished dinner, and my children and I were going to stay the night because it was late.

It was around 7 p.m. when I watched my friend, an otherwise loving mother, turn into a monster. Her oldest son had told her he was hungry again; she snapped, yelling and screaming at him because he was hungry -- I could not believe what I was seeing. I had never seen her act like that; then again I had never seen her come down so hard either, but all I could think was, am I that person? Then out of the blue, she smacked him across his face. Am I that person? I could be, half the time I don't remember crashing out. It was all I could think about: Was I a monster? That day I decided never to do methamphetamines again; it was my inspiration to get clean; I was an addict. I did not know if I was that monster, and I did not want to take the chance that one day I may strike one of my children in a fit of uncontrollable anger.

Quitting was a lot harder than starting; even though I had my day of inspiration, it took me another year and a half that included three relapses, a couple of collapsed veins, and a trip to the hospital to stop using. It has now been five years that I have been a recovering addict. Looking at the scars on my arms sometimes I still have thoughts of what it would be like to do it just one more time; then I remember I don't ever want to be that person. I remember I don't ever want to become a monster.







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