



Rhinebeck High School  
Anthology of  
Student Writing  
2016-2017

TKrom

## **The Writer** by Richard Wilbur

In her room at the prow of the house  
Where light breaks, and the windows are tossed with linden,  
My daughter is writing a story.

I pause in the stairwell, hearing  
From her shut door a commotion of typewriter-keys  
Like a chain hauled over a gunwale.

Young as she is, the stuff  
Of her life is a great cargo, and some of it heavy:  
I wish her a lucky passage.

But now it is she who pauses,  
As if to reject my thought and its easy figure.  
A stillness greatens, in which

The whole house seems to be thinking,  
And then she is at it again with a bunched clamor  
Of strokes, and again is silent.

I remember the dazed starling  
Which was trapped in that very room, two years ago;  
How we stole in, lifted a sash

And retreated, not to affright it;  
And how for a helpless hour, through the crack of the door,  
We watched the sleek, wild, dark

And iridescent creature  
Batter against the brilliance, drop like a glove  
To the hard floor, or the desk-top,

And wait then, humped and bloody,  
For the wits to try it again; and how our spirits  
Rose when, suddenly sure,

It lifted off from a chair-back,  
Beating a smooth course for the right window  
And clearing the sill of the world.

It is always a matter, my darling,  
Of life or death, as I had forgotten. I wish  
What I wished you before, but harder.

**Rhinebeck High School  
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Welcome to Rhinebeck High School's Second Annual Anthology of Student Writing! This year's collection includes writing from all grade levels, and we are proud to feature texts with a variety of purposes and styles. Two pieces in our anthology illustrate a writing strategy called RAFT, in which students assume a **R**ole, write to a specific **A**udience, and choose a particular **F**ormat to explore a **T**opic. This task can be a liberating and fruitful step in the process of long-term research, or an opportunity for creative imagining during a content-heavy unit in any academic discipline.

The English Department hopes these pieces will serve as models in the classroom, inspiring students to write with confidence and clarity in the future. The Writing Center in Room 140 continues to provide an invaluable space for thinking, writing, and revising. We welcome students from any grade or course to visit us at any stage of their writing process.

Many thanks to our students for sharing their words with us. May they continue to hone their craft as young writers, "clearing the sill of the world" as Richard Wilbur's poem suggests. Special thanks to Katie Krom for bringing Wilbur's poem "The Writer" to life as our cover design.

Write on, Rhinebeck!

Sincerely,

The RHS English Department

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21 February 2017

Literary Analysis

*The Tempest: Two Tales of Betrayal*

Betrayal is a powerful feeling. It can overcome a person and make them want to seek revenge. This feeling of betrayal came upon two characters in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: Caliban, an enslaved islander, and Prospero, the rightful duke of Milan whose power was usurped by his brother. After being betrayed, these characters revealed truths about human nature. Caliban revealed that monsters are made, not born, and Prospero revealed that letting go brings inner peace. Both of these truths, however, are revealed differently. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare conveyed these universal truths about human nature through the dialogue of Caliban and through the thoughts of Prospero.

Caliban awoke one day to find Prospero and his daughter on his island. He grew to trust Prospero as he showed him all of the island's secrets, only to have Prospero betray and enslave him. These events turned Caliban into the monster Prospero always believed him to be. This is the truth Caliban's words reveal to us: Monsters are made, not born. Caliban only says horrible things viewed as savagery to Prospero because he is angered by how he was treated. He expresses these feelings as he says, "Cursed be I that did so! All the charms / Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats light on you..."(1.2.406-407). The phrase "Cursed be I that did so!" is referring to his regret of showing Prospero the island. Therefore these are key words as they clearly show the cause of Caliban's anger: Prospero. The first time the audience sees Caliban he says, "A southwest

blow on you / And blister you all o'er" to Prospero (1.2.387-388). This just means that Caliban wishes harm ("blisters") upon Prospero. These lines of dialogue are what Prospero is talking about when he calls Caliban a "savage" or a "beast." But Caliban only wishes this on Prospero because of what he stole from him. Therefore, the only reason that Caliban is a "monster" in Prospero's eyes is because of how Prospero treated him in the first place. What Prospero sees as savagery is Caliban responding to his cruel treatment. Caliban's words reveal Prospero to be the cause of his anger and thus, his "savagery." Therefore, they prove that oppression breeds barbarity.

These feelings of resentment and need for revenge were also felt by Prospero in *The Tempest*. However, in the end, Prospero forgives his enemies instead of continuing to feel anger unlike Caliban. As Prospero decides to forgive and forget, the audience gets a glimpse into his thoughts. In that glimpse, a universal truth about human nature is beginning to be revealed. The audience learns that forgiveness helps achieve inner peace. In this scene Prospero thinks out loud

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,  
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury  
Do I take part. The rarer action is  
In virtue than in vengeance. (5.1.32-38)

This monologue explains how even though Prospero was angry at the noblemen, he took the high road. Key words in these line like "rarer," and "nobler" are used to heighten the impact of the lines. These words create a kind and gentle tone that Prospero had almost never used up until this point. So by making the lines stick out more, it increases their impact on the audience. Prospero did this as somehow, deep down, he knew it would bring him peace. And that it did.

Later on in the scene, Prospero tells the crowd, “Let us not burden our remembrances with / A heaviness that’s gone” (5.1.237-238). In these lines, Prospero says to everyone that he thinks there is nothing to be unhappy about anymore, even when before all Prospero could think about were thoughts of anger. He has cheered up and came to peace with himself. This feeling came to Prospero not when he took revenge, but when he forgave. There is a clear correlation between Prospero’s change in attitude in the forgiveness scene and his optimistic feelings through the rest of the play. Glimpses into Prospero’s thoughts help show that forgiveness allows people to achieve inner peace.

Caliban and Prospero are two characters in *The Tempest* that seem to have nothing in common. But they are more similar than most people realize. Both were betrayed causing them to feel anger and resentment. The only difference in their stories is that Prospero forgave, and Caliban continued to resent. When Prospero let go he began to heal inside revealing that forgiveness leads to inner peace. However, Caliban’s continual feelings of resentment led to constant anger and “savagery” proving that monsters are made, not born. These universal truths about human nature became clear in Caliban’s words and in Prospero’s thoughts, just as Shakespeare intended.

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16 February 2017

Literary Analysis

Creating Love for Another

I will not willingly peel back the scar tissue protecting the deepest chambers of my heart and reveal the bruised hollows pooled with the blood of old wounds---the terror comes just thinking about it--- but now, facing darkness, I am left with no choice. I love you, and because of that I am going to try and raise the dead.

---Louise Bell Closson

Love is an intense feeling of deep affection. We have been experiencing it for thousands of years. In *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, the creature was resurrected from the grip of death. Upon living his life, he has longed for the acceptance of society and dreams of finding someone to share affection with. Now his creator is faced with the question whether to create love or to not create love. Although there are numerous reasons for a mate to not be created, Victor Frankenstein should create a mate for his monster.

Throughout the creature's life he has been longing for the affection of another. Upon meeting with Frankenstein, the creature has one request: "You must create a female for me, with whom I can live the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. This you alone can do; and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse to concede"(Shelly 147). Frankenstein refused to accept the request of his monster because he does not want to create another like the creature who may desolate the world. The creature is angered to the point of hostility. The creature claims that he will "work at [Victor's] destruction" and will not finish until

he “curses the hour of [his] birth” (Shelly 148). Frankenstein was moved by the threats of Oster 2 desolation. Upon thinking through the consequences of consent, Victor decides to create a mate for his creature. At this point Victor realises that he owes this to his creature after rejecting him. Victor open the world of equality, affection, and a link to the chain of existence to his creature.

With the creation of a mate underway, the creature swears that all terror will be stopped. The creature insists that “neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again” (Shelly 148). But, Frankenstein feels that by creating another monster the creature will “have a companion to aid [him] in the task of destruction” (Shelly 149). Shortly after complying with the request, Frankenstein consents to the persistent demand for a mate. The creature swears “by the sun, and by the blue sky of Heaven, and by the fire of love...while they exist you shall never behold me again” (Shelly 150). Upon taking this oath to leave Europe and cause no more harm to any other being, the creature will have the opportunity to live a long and happy life which he is entitled to after being deprived from guidance from his “father.”

Many reasons have been made clear why Frankenstein shouldn't create another monster. If another creature were to be created it may cause harm to others just like the previous creation. The creature “grasped [William's] throat to silence him, and in a moment he lay dead at my feet”(Shelly 144). The creature meant no harm to William whatsoever. There was no expression of wanting to hurt William. The only intention was to educate William as a companion and friend. Steps were taken try and make a friend in a society that can reject easily, but this attempt failed. The creature explains to Victor, “I am malicious because I am miserable”(Shelley 147). Another reason as to why Frankenstein should not meet the demands of his current monster is that he is afraid of his creature being rejected. The creature has already spent most of his life loathing his

own deformity. Victor considers the fact that “she also might turn with disgust from Oster 3 him to the superior beauty of man” (Shelly 170). The creature isn't asking for some random female, he is asking for a girl that looks like him. He wants a to be attracted to someone who looks just like him and can understand him. The creature argues, “It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off of all the world; but on that account we shall be more attracted to one another” (Shelly 148). The love life of the creature is being placed in Frankenstein's hands.

No matter who you are, you will do anything for love. As humans, we build ourselves up just to be broken down, rip open old wounds to show how hurt we've become, and lastly when we are facing darkness, with no other choice, we would raise the dead. If that doesn't explain love in the rawest of ways, then one may never know the true meaning of the word.

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May 2017

In-Class Essay:  
Entering the Conversation on  
Shakespeare's *Othello*

The Tragic Consequences of Othering

In William Shakespeare's tragedy, *Othello*, the Venetians portray Othello as an outsider, or an Other, because he is of a different race, and formerly, a different religion. Two characters, Brabantio and Iago, are especially disdainful and racist with the words and phrases they use towards or to refer to Othello. The language use of these two characters ultimately leads to Othello's tragic transformation because he internalizes their feelings of superiority and hatred towards him, making a final decision based off this mindset.

After Othello marries Desdemona, her father, Brabantio, becomes aware of the occurrence and brings Othello in front of the Duke to speak about his relationship with Desdemona. Brabantio immediately bombards Othello with nasty words and slurs, his first thought being "thou hast enchanted her," implying that Desdemona would never fall for Othello, so he must have used some type of supernatural force to seduce her (I.II.77). Brabantio continues on his rant, saying that Desdemona has "run from her guardage to the sooty bosom," an allusion to the devil. Brabantio is saying that Othello is the devil, and that Desdemona has run off to be with him, the soot being the remains of a hellish fire, and the sooty bosom signifying Othello because he is black (I.II.85). Brabantio uses dehumanizing language which Othello internalizes, leading to his tragic transformation.

Iago also uses language that is very foul and hateful towards Othello. In Act I, Scene I, Iago tells Brabantio that “an old black ram is topping your white ewe (96).” Iago is saying that Othello, who is black, is sexually exploiting/ having a relationship with Desdemona who is white. Iago compares Othello to a large and powerful ram who has Desdemona, who is a powerless and white ewe, under his control. Iago often refers to Othello as a “Moor” throughout the text, a term for someone who is most likely a Muslim from Northern Africa or South East Europe/Arabia. This term is frank and highly inappropriate to use towards someone, but in the time period, this was deemed the usual.

Othello internalizes the feelings of hatred and disdain shown towards him and kills himself in the final act of the play. Othello has the conflicting ideas that he is a Venetian hero as well as a villain (Berry). He cannot see himself as both, and later states “Threw away a pearl richer than all his tribe and... took by the throat the circumcised dog and smote him (V.II.400).” Othello is saying that he once killed the villainous Turk, but now considers himself one. The act ends with Othello committing suicide, the hatred and dislike displayed towards him persuading him to take his own life.

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Author Study Project: Literary Analysis,  
Research, and Argument

### Realism and Naturalism at Work: Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

It is well known that *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane is his literary masterpiece. As an American favorite, the book itself speaks volumes about the common soldier in war. Much like the various plays written by Shakespeare, Stephen Crane's book is a timeless piece of literature and will stay with the people of America for the rest of our time. It is a chilling story of a young boy's misguided views of war and how he gets through his own cowardice and eventually sees what it's like to be a real soldier and deal with the horrors of war. The main character grows a lot as his story progresses: he shows displays of pathetic cowardice, and he displays acts of courageous heroism, but as his story progresses the latter becomes more consistent. Throughout *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, the reader is constantly impacted by Crane's hybrid literary styles, his heavy use of imagery to show the theme of courage built throughout war, and the timeless relationship Henry shares with kids going to war for the wrong reasons, rather than the right reasons such as freedom. Crane employs a field of literary techniques throughout his book but the most evident and the most powerful is his use of imagery. Crane's text also shows influence from two literary movements: Realism and Naturalism. These two literary movements, coupled with imagery, history, and Crane's own background, come together to create one of literature's many greats, and it exposes war for what it is. But it also shows the courageous acts of



a young man struggling to get through a war he joined in quest for glory and honor.

*The Red Badge of Courage* is a well written book due to its portrayal of the truth behind war and its literary techniques. But what also makes it unique and telling of a man's courage is the historical accuracy. While Henry himself and his story are not real per se, there were and still are thousands of men and boys just like him with the same story. Time may change but war never changes and neither do people, people are still joining the military to find honor and glory, only to realize that the only thing they will find is horror and maybe some will find the courage to get through it, just like Henry. That whole theme is what makes this a timeless piece. The reader can also clearly see that Crane used historical facts to write his masterpiece. For example, in the Civil War the South was heavily outnumbered by the North, but because of their good Generals and ferocious tactics the Union troops feared the Confederates. They believed them monsters and fiends in battle and that clearly shows in the book. The Confederate armies would out fight the Union armies even though they were outnumbered two or three to one, and they would fight with an ardent tenacity that would frighten the Union soldiers. In Henry's first battle this exact thing happened. The Confederates were outnumbered, but they broke the Union line and the Union had to retreat and flee from their enemy, and luckily for Henry this made him feel like less of a coward because the rest of his regiment retreated with him. The historical accuracy also helps portray the theme of surviving and the brutal truth of war, meaning that sometimes retreat is the best option to survive. Retreat may have been a good option for Henry because in the Civil War America sustained its most casualties ever in U.S. history. The war left almost 750,000 dead (Cayton). This is even more American casualties than World War I and World War II combined (Cayton).

After the war there was a period of reconstruction that was known as the Reconstruction Era (Valentine), this was also when Stephen Crane was born. Stephen Crane had a remarkably unsuccessful life. His one year of college was a failure and a waste, he transferred to two schools in that year (Colvert). He didn't do anything notable until he published his first novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), when he was only twenty-one (Colvert). Then just two years after came his masterpiece. *The Red Badge of Courage* shows the time period in which Crane was born and raised in. Meaning throughout the book the reader may notice no racism towards the black people and no hatred or bias towards the South. He shows no hatred or bias because he was born during reconstruction and the Government wanted the people of the North and the South to become one great country again (Valentine). Also, there is no racism in the book because the black people, at the time of the book's writing, were now considered free folk and "equal" although they weren't truly treated that way (Valentine). Another amazing feature about the writing of this book is the realistic portrayal of war. Many shows, movies and books have controversy surrounding them about how unrealistic they are towards war and only a few shows, books and movies get war veteran approved. *The Red Badge of Courage* is one of the few books that is commonly agreed by veterans to be a disturbingly real depiction of war. Now some might say that because of Stephen Crane's stint as a war correspondent he has experienced war and he knows what it's like, but that would be incorrect. Stephen Crane wrote this book before his time as a war correspondent which makes his description and accuracy of war, according to veterans, even more amazing.

Henry's courage is a very controversial topic throughout this book and Crane uses specific literary techniques to bring it out. Henry is often considered to be a coward and a fool. However,

as the book goes on he becomes courageous and grows from a boy to a man. Crane reaches this through many techniques, but one big way is his use of the two very influential literary movements: Realism, and Naturalism. These two stick out in his book quite often, the Realism and Naturalism are very evident in Crane's style of writing. His naturalist style, just like most naturalism, is based off accurate detail, detachment and determinism (Burt). Crane uses all of these techniques throughout his novel. His main use of Naturalism ,though, comes from detachment and the use of nature as a liaison for inner Henry. For example, he detaches himself from Henry Fleming by only referring to him as "the youth" for the length of the book: "The youth went slowly toward the fire indicated by his departed friend." (Crane 85). Crane constantly refers to Henry as simply "the youth" because this shows the author's detachment from the character, and that Henry is not some unique hero who can seem to do anything. It also shows that Henry is just another boy and this can connect with the readers on a more personal basis. The detachment used also makes Henry's growth from boy to man much more surprising and interesting. That is because readers don't see it coming, and when they do they realize that not only has he become a man but he has regained his courage and righted his original wrong of retreating. Another example of his use of naturalism is his use of colors and nature: "Trees, confronting him, stretched out their arms and forbade him to pass." (Crane 56). Crane's use of naturalism throughout the book in a way helps convey what Henry is thinking. In the recently used example the trees act as Henry's fellow soldiers, meaning that they are figuratively trying to block Henry from running away from the battle. The trees help to show Henry's guilt. This use of nature is very different from the one at the end of the book, but it still symbolizes Henry internally as a character. At the end Henry is symbolized as the sun breaking through clouds: "Over the river a

golden ray of sun came through the hosts of leaden rain clouds” (Crane 155). Now at the end instead of seeing nature as a barrier, like the trees, Henry sees it as awe-inspiring, and liberating him from the overhanging rain clouds that symbolize his old guilty conscience. His new courageous and confident self has emerged because he has gotten past his cowardice and regained his dignity through his courage and labors during battle.

Crane’s literary use of realism is also evident throughout the text. He is a realist writer because the issues he writes about in *The Red Badge of Courage* actually have happened, are happening, and will always happen. And it is key in realist writing to write about real things, and use heavy and accurate detail to help convey the happening (Rosen). Crane also shows he is influenced by realism through the suspense and emotion of real war and it hits home with the reader (Rosen). The Civil War was a very real and a very brutal war. It messed with people's minds, and it was a war fought with savagery. Brothers fought brothers and men struggled with moral dilemmas on a daily basis just like Henry does throughout this book. These real life like thoughts, emotions and the historical context are what make this a Realist piece. Crane also uses very extraordinary detail to bring these parts in the book to life as well as all the other parts in the book. Like a simple task such as a retreat is completely changed: “They slowly retreated, with their faces still toward the spluttering woods, and their hot rifles still replying to the din” (Crane 125). Crane uses detail to make a scene much more interesting. Instead of simply saying “they slowly covered their retreat” like many authors would do, Crane goes on to talk about their “hot rifles” shooting back as they retreated. He also refers to the woods as “spluttering” which lets the reader know that there are shots from the muskets and rifles all throughout the wood line coming sporadically to and from the enemy. Crane does this all through Henry’s story, using

detail to make what would normally be a quick boring phrase to describe a monotonous task into a story of its own that grabs the reader's attention like a gunshot would a dog. This detail is also shown in the earlier quotes about nature. Crane's use of realism, like the previous example throughout the book, and his use of naturalism, like the examples earlier, help bring the book from just "another war story" to one of America's most treasured pieces of literature. Not only this, but the details in the quote further the growth of Henry's courage from a misguided boy to a man who has seen and done things that not many "men" can say they have done.

While Crane does employ many literary techniques and is influenced by literary movements throughout the book, the one that stands tall above the rest is his use of imagery. Crane uses imagery to paint his battle scenes with a steady hand, and it makes them so vivid and lifelike for his readers. Right in the beginning of the first battle is when you see the imagery used to make the book feel real: "After the fever had left his veins, the youth thought that at last he was going to suffocate. He became aware of the foul atmosphere in which he had been struggling." (Crane 41). He has the boy not sitting on a field of glory standing triumphant, like most authors would, but struggling to breathe in a "foul atmosphere" to show the wretched reality of war through imagery. Instead of breathing "the youth" is suffocating and struggling for air. "The flaming opposition in their front grew with their advance until it seemed that all forward ways were barred by the thin leaping tongues..."(Crane 122). Here, instead of saying simply that the enemy fire grew more intense as they advanced and that the good guys couldn't go forward because they were being hammered by gun fire, Crane uses imagery to make it seem much more d immersive. When he says "flaming opposition," the reader can see the wall of men with fire, lead, and smoke coming out of their rifles. Also, the words "thin leaping tongues" lets the reader

know that the flames “leaping” from the musket are trying to reach Henry and his regiment. His choice of words throughout the entire book, opens new doors of possibilities to reading. Instead of just seeing another man fire a musket, the reader can see the flame leaping out of it which helps paint a small portion of a large picture.. Without his use of imagery *The Red Badge of Courage* would be like a man bereft of his soul, just a shell of what it truly could be. Crane’s imagery is also what really helps develop Henry’s courage because as the book progresses the reader can *see* what Henry is laboring through, not just read it. For example, Crane writes: “The youth had centered the gaze of his soul upon that other flag” (Crane 145). Taking an enemy regimental flag is one of the greatest achievements a soldier could do during a battle. This is because the flag was the most heavily protected thing in any regiment so to take it would be taking the pride and honour of the regiment. It therefore takes an insane amount of courage to do this because everyone in the enemy regiment will focus his attention on the person with the flag and perform breathtaking feats to get that flag back. And for Henry to not simply just want to take the flag, but to center his soul’s desire onto it, that means he will need to take it or die trying. And taking an enemy colour is an act that requires unparalleled courage and audacity to fulfill. And the fact that Henry does complete it speaks volumes of the courage he has built during his time in war. And thanks to the imagery used the reader can see Henry’s courage blossom.

Literary critic Marvin Klotz has a few opinions on Henry's courage. He thinks that Crane chose a boring man as his main character, and he thinks Henry is weak and a coward: “Crane, I contend, attempted to lay bare the conduct of an ordinary man at war and he chose as his central character (I hesitate to call him hero) the most depressingly ordinary man he could conceive” (Klotz). I think at times Henry is ordinary, but he is not depressingly so because he achieved what

rare few have achieved and that is the capturing of an enemy regiment colours. He also gets through his moral dilemmas at the end of the book after redeeming himself by fighting like a demon. Also, the whole point of the story is to have a semi-ordinary person as the main character. This makes the book more interesting, and it touches a lot more people emotionally that way. Not only that, but it makes the book more realistic, true and meaningful because there have probably been millions of kids like Henry all throughout time who have gone into war for all the wrong reasons just like Henry. And these kids have to fight and claw their way out of the pit of realization as to what war truly is and their self doubt, after their first real encounter of war turns out to be nightmare rather than a tale of knights in shining armor. I concede that Henry is quite an ordinary kid, and has a predictable and ordinary life, but it's his deeds that make him a great main character and it's his dynamic growth throughout the book. Instead of always being a hero or always being a coward, he is both. And he doesn't just go from one to the other and it's done, but he has to grow through it and he flip flops between the two at times until he finally becomes the man he was meant to be. So in short, I disagree with Marvin Klotz's opinion of Henry. Crane used Henry as the main character not because the book was about his heroism, but because the books was about Henry's change and growth, to connect with all the kids or men that could, can or will be able to relate to Henry's story.

Throughout the *Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, the reader is constantly impacted by Crane's hybrid of literary movements and his heavy use of imagery to show the theme of courage built throughout war, and the timeless relationship Henry shares with kids going to war for the wrong reasons. While Henry is not a real person, his story is real for so many people past, present, and future. That is because there has been and always will be war. And while the

weapons and time may change, war itself never changes. And as long as war stays the same, the reasons of joining war will also never change. People seek honor and glory, but all they ever find is horror and death. This is the true test of anyone's courage. Henry passes this test regardless of what anyone says because he is a changed man at the end of the book, and his courage increases tenfold over the story. Crane helps reach this by using Realism, Naturalism and Imagery. His use of imagery helps paint a picture of what's happening throughout the book so the reader will never forget. The Naturalism makes it more believable because the author detaches himself from the character and conveys his thoughts and emotions through the use of colors and nature. And the Realism makes it real. Because the story of Henry is so true and people can relate to it, the book becomes real. Not only that but the book is historically accurate and relevant which are key parts of Realism. Those three things catapult *The Red Badge of Courage* to a whole new level of books. He changed literary dynamics as they were known at the time. Because his books was neither Romantic nor sentimental, he ignited a new era in the late 19th Century. Stephen Crane's masterpiece connects with veterans and kids who want to join the military and touches the mind and heart of all those who read it. This book does that so well that it's considered one of the greatest books ever written in American literary history. And it's all because of the use of Realism, Naturalism, and his impressionist like imagery.



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Author Study Project: Literary Analysis,  
Research, and Argument

### The Mule of the World

Often described as the queen of the Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston's writing reached countless readers with its colorful language, dramatic narratives, and deep truths on human interactions. Although ecofeminism, the activist and academic movement that sees critical connections between the domination of nature and the exploitation of women, originated after Hurston's career, the themes in her work are reflected with this ideology: (*Women and Life on Earth: What Is Ecofeminism?*). Ecofeminism not only criticizes the capitalist, male dominated oppression of women and nature, it also celebrates the previously overlooked integrity of both women and the natural environment. In both *Spunk*, one of Hurston's popular short stories, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a novel that is viewed as her masterpiece, Zora Neale Hurston uses imagery through the setting and symbolism in nature to explore these themes of gender and nature in hierarchal human behavior.

Before entering into an analysis of Hurston's theme, it is necessary to provide context, given the significant and unusual circumstances of her life and her genius. Hurston was a complex and unique character. She became the most published black female author of her time, yet she died in poverty and obscurity in 1960 ("Zora Neale Hurston"). At one point, her focus shifted from writing to anthropology, the study of human societies and cultures and their development. In her

texts, her anthropological or social analytic attitude is very apparent. Hurston deconstructs societal norms in Eatonville by using a rich cast of complicated characters, plot points, and elaborate metaphors and description of nature.

It's important to acknowledge the time Hurston's career truly flourished: The Harlem Renaissance. This period in the 1920s is described as "a period of newfound and hard-won artistic and social freedom for African-Americans" ("The Harlem Renaissance"). Famous writer Langston Hughes noted in his essay "The Negro Artist," "If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves" (Langston Hughes qtd. In "The Harlem Renaissance"). Hurston represents this imperative vision of black art. Her novel is one of the first novels not only without a dominant white character but also with a black female as the main character. It is safe to say that Hurston "personified the movement" ("Zora Neale Hurston").

Hurston's writing style is also key in the understanding of her texts. She combines a unique folklore style with aspects of the modernist literary period. Modernists consider their writing to be from a new point of view that was never before used by writers. This came from changes within other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Modernism involves multifaceted characters and the point of view shifted from an omniscient narrator to the varied and subjective points of view of many characters ("Modernism"). At times in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Janie, a complex character, is recalling her own past. Throughout the novel, different members of the community offer their own 'takes' on significant events. Also, Hurston used what she knew, Eatonville and folklore, to explore identity concepts from a regional

perspective that was unfamiliar to many. According to Geneva Cobb-Moore, author of *Maternal Metaphors of Power in African American Women's Literature*, "critics now acknowledge the national or even universal dimensions and implications of regional literature and see it as echoing certain moral and historical truths about our humanity." This concept of regionalism certainly holds true for Hurston and her descriptions of Eatonville.

Eatonville, Zora Neale Hurston's hometown, is the environmental backbone for the vast majority of Hurston's works. Eatonville is described by Hurston in *Mules and Men* as "a city of five lakes, three croquet courts, three hundred brown skins, three hundred good swimmers, plenty guavas, two schools, and no jail house." In addition, Eatonville is at the heart of Hurston's upbringing (Cobb-Moore). The community affects the way Hurston's characters think and feel and accounts for a large part of their identities. For example, when Janie starts to spend time with Tea Cake, Hurston offers the community's opinion: "You better sense her in tuh things then 'cause Tea Cake can't do nothing but help her spend what she got...Throwin' away what Joe Starks worked hard tuh get together" (Hurston 108). In a way, the community members serve as a kind of Greek chorus. Their opinions contribute to a theme of marginalization and domination by oppressing men (and their politically complicit women) which Janie must overcome in order to find her own true inner nature.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is prolific in theme. Challenging discourses on race, gender, community, and religion are all presented in this novel, as the main character, Janie, struggles through three marriages to find her independence, self worth and true inner nature. So how did Hurston manage to unify all of these issues in a single, complicated narrative? The answer is through the use of symbols of the natural world. Janie's subjugation by others, as well as her

inner quest for meaning, are depicted as natural environmental processes. Hurston uses interactions between humans and animals and imagery from nature to represent conflicts over dominance and hierarchies.

In the beginning of the novel, Hurston describes Janie's physical development by use of an elaborate metaphor of natural plant growth. "So Janie waited a bloom time, and a green time and an orange time. But when the pollen again gilded the sun and sifted down on the world she began to stand around the gate and expect things... She knew the world was a stallion rolling in the blue pasture of ether. She knew that God tore down the old world every evening and built a new one by sun-up. It was wonderful to see it take form with the sun and emerge from the gray dust of its making" (Hurston 25). This language demonstrates that the gradual process of growth in plants and ecosystems are similar to the development of Janie as a woman.

This beautiful and natural unfolding of Janie's growth stands in dramatic contrast with another metaphor from the natural world, which appears a little bit earlier in the novel, of Janie as an object of subjugation. Her grandmother and primary caregiver, Nanny, speaks to Janie about the social order to which she must submit as a black woman. Nanny explains to her, "'Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as Ah been able tuh find out... De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see" (Hurston 14). Nanny explains that the mule is an animal that has been dominated and is used to "carry the load," similar to black women.

Later in the novel, when members of the community are harassing a mule outside the store because of its obstinance, Janie shows compassion for the mule. Hurston writes:

"Everybody was having fun at the mule-baiting. All but Janie. She snatched her head away from the spectacle and began muttering to

herself. 'They oughta be shamed uh theyselves! Teasin' dat poor brute beast like they is! Done been worked tuh death; done had his disposition ruint wid mistreatment, and now they got tuh finish devilin' 'im tuh death.'" (56)

Janie identifies with the rebellion of the mule as similar to her own struggle, and she is outraged in the disrespect the men show for it. By comparing black women to mules, Hurston displays how animals, the earth, and women of color are all beings historically conquered and exploited by white men.

Toward the climax of the novel, Janie and her true love, Tea Cake, endure the trauma of a devastating hurricane. There is an elaborate and gripping scene in which Tea Cake helps Janie avoid drowning by encouraging her to climb onto a cow swimming in the swirling waters. A growling dog is also seeking to keep above the waters by perching on the same cow. Hurston describes the fight: "The cow sunk a little with the added load and thrashed a moment in terror. Thought she was being pulled down by a gator." The ambiguity of the indefinite pronoun "she" serves to suggest the idea that Janie and the cow, both objects of subjugation and desperation, are interchangeable. Hurston continues, "The dog stood up and growled like a lion, stiff-standing hackles, stiff muscles, teeth uncovered as he lashed up his fury for the charge. Tea Cake split the water like an otter, opening his knife as he dived." (166). Just as Janie and the cow are intertwined metaphors of passive acquiescence to a large natural force (the flood), so too Tea Cake and the rabid dog are intertwined figures of male aggression and action to change the course of events in their favor. It's a fight to the death, and only one male will win.

The ending of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is especially controversial because Janie's

actions, coming back to her town in overalls and telling her story to her old friend Pheoby, can be seen either as going backwards to her previous fate, or as a process of spiritual and psychological maturation and acceptance. Hurston concludes the novel with this image of Janie as a fisher(wo)man: "She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net..So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see" (193). This image, on the one hand, evokes a picture of Janie at one with existence, living peacefully with her fate in the universe. On the other hand, it suggests an image of a fisherman as a hunter, using nets to exploit and drain the sea of its resources. Which is Janie now?

One literary critic, Jennifer Jordan, claims the novel is not representative of black feminism because of Janie's fate in the end of the novel. She claims, "the contention that Janie becomes an activist and leader in the community is also not supported by the text..the imagery of the ending of the novel connotes the very opposite of activism and involvement". Jordan's feminist ideal is of a woman who commits to social progress. However, perhaps Hurston ended the book this way to complete Janie's narrative to embody an ecofeminist allegory. In ecofeminist theory, overcoming male oppression, both as a woman and as nature, is viewed as a return to one's most organic and untouched state. Feminists are not successful by emulating male power and dominance, rather, in eco-feminism both male and female change their perspective and develop a new respect for nature 'as it is'. Therefore, the final image of Janie 'fishing' represents the ecofeminist achievement.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* is not the only piece of text by Hurston that displays interactions between nonhuman beings to portray humanist roles of dominance. In *Spunk*, one of Hurston's many short stories, a woman named Lena is seen with another man who kills her

husband. However, after this man dies the couple seems to be haunted by a bobcat and her new man mysteriously dies in an “accident” shortly after. The bobcat is described “...Spunk an’ Lena moved together an’ jus’ as they was goin’ to bed, a big black bob cat, black all over...walked round and round that house howled like forty...”. The behavior of the bobcat and its interaction with the humans demonstrates symbolism in human character and how revenge will be implemented if one takes someone’s woman (their property in historical context) In addition, the bobcat, which is emulating a male character, seems to be aggressively vocal and on the prowl. Perhaps, Hurston is trying to denote the concept of hypermasculinity through animal activity.

*Spunk* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* have an important similarity. In both, the main female character’s identity is dependent on what her community thinks of her and what man she is with. At the second husband’s funeral, the narrator of *Spunk* notes, “The women ate heartily of the funeral baked meats and wondered who would be Lena’s next. The men whispered coarse conjectures between guzzles of whiskey” (Hurston). The mentioning of the community’s opinion on Lena and now development of her character prior, demonstrates how the female’s identity, like the environment, is a highly valued object that is always in someone else’s possession.

Hurston’s texts might have been highly misunderstood at the time they were written. The magnificent poetry and folkloric voice in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* captivates contemporary readers, both White and Black, male and female, because of the subtlety and ambiguity of her mysterious message. An ecofeminism outlook looks beyond simple dualities and connects the text to a struggle that affects all humans universally: the balance between mankind and our Mother Earth.



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Literary Analysis: From Memoir to Fiction

### Virginia Woolf's Struggles as an Artist of a New Era

In Virginia Woolf's autobiographical work "A Sketch of the Past" from *Moments of Being*, Woolf articulates the struggles she has encountered as a writer and individual, many of which are mirrored by characters in *To the Lighthouse*. For example, the abstract painter, Lily Briscoe, is often thought to symbolize Virginia Woolf because of the similar personal insecurities and artistic struggles they share. But stuck in the shift of an era leaving behind the Victorian "ornamental, verbose style" and moving towards looser structures and succinct language, Woolf had to pave her own path in the literary world. Similar to other great modernist writers such as Ernest Hemingway and Langston Hughes, in *To the Lighthouse* Woolf breaks Victorian conventions to accurately translate her insecurity about her femininity and artistic mission to capture whole moments.

In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf painfully recounts moments in her youth when she felt extremely discomforted by her femininity. "To come into a room wearing a new dress -- still frightens me" she earnestly admits (*Moments of Being* 69). This "looking-glass shame" as she often refers to it, made her feel "shy, self-conscious, [and] uncomfortable" because indulging in superficial concerns like her appearance went against the image of the unconventional woman she created for herself. Even though she later explains that her "tomboy" phase may have been a

response to the sexual abuse she experienced as a child, there are similarities between her insecurity with her femininity and that which Lily Briscoe experiences. In *To the Lighthouse*, Lily Briscoe is painted as a charming and introspective individual. But similar to Woolf, Lily embraces a different definition of woman redefining gender roles by pursuing art and writing and paying limited attention to her romantic desires. This is a clear example of how Woolf's words in "A Sketch of the Past" come to life in her novel *To the Lighthouse*.

Woolf also describes her frustration with the social and political confines of gender roles in the late 19th to early 20th centuries in "A Sketch of the Past." Although the emergence of modernism marked a new era for women and African Americans, it was a long time before any substantial cultural changes occurred. Women were still expected to be homemakers who refrained from expressing their opinions on any political matter and remained blindly loyal to their husbands, much like Mrs. Ramsay's character in *To the Lighthouse*. But throughout her life, Virginia Woolf made a conscious decision to oppose norms. She was known to frequently engage in "intellectual discussion" and was an active member of the progressive Bloomsbury district in London (Scutts, "Historical Context for To the Lighthouse."). In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf delves into a deep exploration of the "instinctive" fears she experienced as a young girl about her sexuality. Woolf explains that, while she disagrees with the existence of universal fears of women on a political level, it is an innate form of knowledge passed throughout generations that cannot be controlled (Woolf 69). Similar to how Woolf is ashamed of how her femininity contradicts her progressive principles, Lily Briscoe is ashamed of falling into the trap social norms in a male-dominant society. During the dinner scene, Lily briefly forgets her steadfast independence and progressive lifestyle, finding herself feeling involuntarily discouraged by Tansley's chant

“Women can't write, women can't paint“ (*To the Lighthouse* 86). Unable to understand her response to his words, Lily grapples to find a reason why he was able to so deeply affect her. How did “the most uncharming human being she had ever met” who meant so little to her, make her question her purpose? It is in this moment that Virginia Woolf’s internal battle against gender norms shines through. Despite all of her conscious efforts to disregard society’s disapproval of her independence, she could not run from the male-dominant society surrounding her.

In “A Sketch of the Past,” Woolf also reveals some of her artistic struggles and goals as a writer. She first speaks about the difficulty in capture the essence of a moment in its entirety. Wrestling to find “the right word” to encompass both the “sight” and “sound” of a moment, Woolf expresses how she aims to recreate the whole essence of a memory and not simply “remember here a scene and there a sound” (*Moments of Being* 67). Because Woolf sees writing as an art and her life's work, she aims to “paint” a cohesive picture of moment so her readers can step inside her reality and experience her past accurately. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf describes Mrs. Ramsay as an artist of a similar nature because of her ability to preserve a moment. To Mrs. Ramsay, planning and executing a flawless dinner party was not a frivolous or compulsive, but art itself. For in her mind, a perfect dinner would become an eternal memory that each of her guests would carry with them forever. Like Woolf, Mrs. Ramsay lives to pause the “chaos” around her.

Lily Briscoe also shares Woolf’s mission to preserve a moment in time as described in “A Sketch of the Past.” Lily is the literal representation of Woolf’s artistic side as she actually preserves moment on canvas for a living. The last scene when Lily makes the final line through the center of the canvas is her version of Mrs. Ramsay's moment at the dinner party. When Lily finally declares “I have had my vision,” all three characters, including Virginia Woolf, seem to

collide (*Moments of Being* 161). Lily's central line, Mrs. Ramsay's dinner party, and Woolf's perfect word are equivalent symbols for the ultimate purpose of art in the context of Modernism: to provide stability in a world of chaos.

Throughout *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf utilizes strict modernist conventions that depict a strong break from the traditions of the Realist, Impressionist, and Victorian literary periods (1800s). The use of a "stream-of-consciousness" writing style is a clear example of how Woolf rebelled from the structure ways of 19th century literature. But Woolf also found her own way throughout experiment to express her individualism. It is evident in *To the Lighthouse*, that Woolf was neither as succinct as Hemingway (Wood 151), nor as verbose as Flaubert (Wood 120). She was an artist in her own right who found a unique balance between convention and innovation. Wood describes his experience reading Woolf's line from *The Waves*, "The day waves yellow with all its crops, being unable to decipher why." As he is marveled at the the fact the we as readers "know exactly and instantly what Woolf means," Woolf's artistry becomes clear by her ability to transform "simple" words into brilliant art time and time again (Wood 185).

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October 17 2016

Entering the Conversation:  
Argument with a Literary Critic

### The “Hamlet and His Problems” Problem

Of all of William Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* is undoubtedly his most well-known. So many references are made in popular culture to his other works like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, yet *Hamlet* stands in a league of its own. No play by any author has ever been so ingrained in culture as *Hamlet* is. However, attempting to pin down exactly why it's been so influential is a difficult task. Certainly it contains some of Shakespeare's more relatable characters. Hamlet's emotions in the beginning of the play are instantly recognizable to the audience, and even his descent into madness and eventual resurgence makes some kind of emotional sense. However, *Hamlet's* popularity may be a function of its style. The play is barely coherent. There are scenes that serve no purpose, as well as there are other exciting events concerning main characters that exist completely offstage. Examples include Hamlet's intensely awkward conversation with Osric that only serves to delay the play's climax and Hamlet's negotiating with the pirates, respectively. The popularity of *Hamlet* may be explained by these strange decisions. They lend much to unpack and analyze.

In his essay “Hamlet and His Problems” T.S. Eliot explores the criticism of *Hamlet's* extraneous scenes and what it means for the play as a whole. He says that “the play is puzzling, and disquieting as is none of the others.” He makes reference to the same “superfluous and

inconsistent” scenes, and later he specifically articulates his point. He says rather dismissively that “more people have thought *Hamlet* a work of art because they found it interesting, then have found it interesting because it is a work of art.” Naturally Eliot’s observation only makes sense under the definitions of art and criticism as are laid out with strict aestheticism and Eliot’s own New Criticism movement. It would be unfair of anyone to dispute Eliot’s claim in his essay that *Hamlet* is “most certainly an artistic failure,” if they were not working under the same definitions as he was. A conversation in which the words used do not have agreed-upon definitions would be futile. Instead of debating Eliot on his claim, it’s more use to examine the purpose of that claim and what it means for the discussion of the work.

Perhaps presenting Eliot’s claim as “*Hamlet* is an artistic failure,” is misleading. After all, “*Hamlet and His Problems*,” argues that *Hamlet* is barely a product of Shakespeare at all. The essay postulates that since *Hamlet* is a loose adaptation of the Thomas Kyd play *The Spanish Tragedy*, or that both plays are based on the Ur-Hamlet, Shakespeare could not alter its themes as he wished which resulted in the complicated mess we dissect today (Eliot 2; Hansen 66-80). Eliot’s claim then becomes “*Hamlet* is a failure of the artist” rather than his original “*Hamlet* is an artistic failure.” The difference between these two claims is just to clarify our understanding of Eliot’s meaning. Eliot is saying that *Hamlet* is an unfinished or abandoned work of art, and that must be kept in mind in any criticism of it. Something that he chides other critics for not addressing (Eliot).

Eliot’s reminder to critics of *Hamlet* that the play is what is being dissected, not the characters, and that *Hamlet* is ultimately a failed project from Shakespeare is very useful. There is no arguing that. “*Hamlet and His Problems*” is a perfectly self-contained argument that offers a



new perspective on *Hamlet*. That being said, it is not useful to every form of criticism. Eliot's essay argues that whatever meaning that can be gleaned from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is ultimately tainted by it being a "failure," under his theory of how it was written. Because of this, his argument is reminiscent of deconstruction, though it lacks the self-awareness of that critical outlook. I propose that while Eliot is correct, discussion and criticism of *Hamlet* is severely stifled by his argument. T.S. Eliot would argue that a half-finished canvas, splattered with black paint in a fit of rage from its painter and left in the gutter must always remain in that context when viewed. You must always be conscious that, no matter what emotion that canvas produces, it is garbage. That is not how one appreciates art. We assign authority to artists. When watching a performance of *Hamlet* for the first time, no one believes Shakespeare to have anything short of perfect control over the text. We accept that this version is the complete work, the one the author intended to make and for us to see. Discussion occurs in that state.

To clarify my position of the author's authority allow me to present an example. One of the most controversial scenes in *Hamlet* is Act V, Scene 2. Osric is introduced in this scene, but character is never heard from again and his motives are nonexistent. The only discernable reason for his presence in the play is to deliver the invitation of a duel from Laertes to Hamlet. This scene is no doubt one of the "superfluous and inconsistent scenes which even hasty revision should have noticed" (Eliot). The character of Osric is almost certainly proof of "artistic failure" to Eliot. "However, if you assume Shakespeare's authority, and by extension, assume Osric's scene has meaning, you suddenly gain the ability to examine his character and his scene. The same result can be gained under the "Death of the Author" lens of criticism. Essentially, in order to discuss a work, you must assume it has meaning either placed deliberately by the author or constructed by

the audience. We must take the work as it exists and examine that. Under this lens, Osric is much more complicated. Take Hamlet's description of him. He describes Osric as unpleasant, a "water-fly" : "... 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile. Let a beast be lord of beasts and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'Tis a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt" (5.2.82-86). Hamlet implies that Osric is a "beast" standing at the "king's mess," implying that he has no place dining with a king. An interested critic could argue that Osric is a representation of the greed and politics that led to Claudius assassinating Hamlet's father and usurping the throne. Additionally, Osric is the only character in Castle Elsinore that is left alive at the end of *Hamlet* other than Horatio and Fortinbras, implying that the cycle of violence and manipulation may begin again. Another valid reading of this scene is that Osric is representative of Hamlet's Madness. All throughout the play Hamlet's madness, whether it is simulated or real, makes Hamlet indecisive. Despite his goal being clear, killing Claudius, he cannot do it. His madness delays the climax of the play, so much so that his madness is the primary source of conflict in the narrative. Similarly, Osric's scene only serves to delay the climax of the play further by one scene. Evidence for this can be seen in Osric's exchange with Hamlet, it mimics the inanity and nonsense of Hamlet's earlier "mad" conversations with Polonius. If we adhered to T.S. Eliot's claim that this scene and others like it are superfluous and the products of artistic failure, these reading would be invalid. At the very least, they would be devalued.

Eliot claims that Shakespeare tried to manipulate the text of the Ur-Hamlet and failed: "Shakespeare was unable to manipulate this motive successfully upon the 'intractable' material of the old play," but this analysis is not very useful in discussing the text. What Shakespeare meant to do is not relevant. The play's strange style informs its themes. It mimics Hamlet's madness and

the indecision he feels. The “unnecessary” scenes and lines are completely necessary for certain readings. Eliot is arguing from a meta aesthetic point of view, critiquing how we analyze the text. My argument is simply that the text is what matters. The author’s intent or failure can inform the text and be used for certain readings, but if you're arguing that other readings do not matter because the author failed, your argument is not useful. T.S. Eliot’s claim is not made invalid by mine, his reminder that the author made an incomplete and failed text is a valuable one, but at the end of the day it may be more valuable to analyze the text we have, rather than the one we could have had.

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English 10R

2 March 2017

Researched Argument on  
a Controversial Issue in Science

Coming to a Store Near You!: Transplantable Organs

If you had an accident and lost or damaged a vital organ, wouldn't you want it replaced? But would you still want that organ if it was grown inside of an animal? That's what human/nonhuman chimera research is all about: growing human organs and brain cells inside animals to better the human race, as well as using animals to help research diseases and develop cures. "Chimera" refers to an animal with other animal's qualities inside it, in this case human stem cells inside livestock animals. Stem cells are cells that contain all the organism's DNA, but have the ability to become any kind of cell (bone, muscle, tissue, etc.). Although some people may consider this field of research unethical, I believe that it is worthwhile and important if it means potentially saving people's lives.

One reason that it is important to continue and promote this research is that it would allow us to replace weak, damaged, or even missing organs in a person's body. Insoo Hyun describes chimera research as a "...branch of stem cell research that aims to grow transportable human organs in genetically modified...animals" (Hyun). This has the potential to be one of the most important and useful practices in medical science. Hyun also recognizes this, saying, "This line of research...could open the door to growing various types of human organs such as hearts and kidneys in livestock animals for transplantation in the future" (Hyun). If scientists utilize this

practice, we would not have to worry about such things like organ failure or heart problems, as an unhealthy or faulty organ could be replaced at any time it is needed.

Another reason that this field of research is important is its potential to help research diseases and cures to those diseases, as well as improve the human immune system. Hyun comments on this in his article: “Human/nonhuman chimera research has existed without much controversy for decades outside of stem cell research, resulting in, for example, mouse models of cancer and the human immune system” (Hyun). This means that this chimera research is helping scientists get closer to a cure of possibly the most fatal disease known to man, cancer, as well as helping to shine light on the problems within the human immune system, allowing scientists to help people become less susceptible to disease. For those with concern on what could go wrong, Hyun adds, “Researchers can take care to proceed in a stepwise fashion through a series of pilot studies, stopping their chimera experiments each time well before the full gestation cycle to examine fetal tissues for any unwanted migration and development of human cells outside the organ niche environment” (Hyun). Scientists can end an experiment at any time if need be, as they are so precise with their experiments; this also means that they can be extremely specific in their observations, which brings us closer to viable disease control or cures.

However, like all sciences, there is a possibility of something going wrong. Inmaculada de Melo-Martín addresses the concern that the addition of human brain cells into the brain of an animal could have an undesired result, saying, “HES [Human Embryonic Stem Cells] cells grafted into nonhuman blastocysts or embryos could lead to humanized brain structures” (de Melo-Martín). But don’t worry just yet, as de Melo-Martín goes onto state that “...at this point no

evidence exists to suggest that a human brain could ever develop in a nonhuman creature” (de Melo-Martín). This fact should be reassuring to anyone who feared otherwise.

Through all of the controversy and debates on the subject, I firmly believe that this is a very important field of scientific discovery and research, as it has the potential to save people’s lives through transplantable human organs and the curing of disease. I believe it would be extremely unfair to tell someone that their life will end early because an organ in their body is damaged, and that there is no replacement available. Chimera research is the solution to that problem.

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English 11

26 October 2016

**Researched Argument:  
American Heroism Defined**

**Ryan White: An American Rebel**

Rebels are inspired to question and abandon societal norms by a variety of circumstances. For some, inspiration is derived from traditions within society that contradict their moral standards. For others, rebellion is an alternative to accepting oppression. Many influential rebels throughout history, including Ryan White, a teenage HIV/AIDS activist and educator, have been provoked by the latter. Instead of viewing their circumstances as a limitation in life, these rebels are driven to better society, and in the case of Ryan White, abolish the social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS.

On December 17, 1984, at the young age of just thirteen, Ryan White was diagnosed with the incurable disease of AIDS. He had contracted the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, through contaminated Factor VIII transfusions, which he had received to treat his hemophilia. From that day forward, White was determined to live as normal a life as possible (“Ryan White”). Regardless of the high goals he set for himself and immense determination, there was no escaping the discrimination White dealt with his entire life. Without the proper knowledge on AIDS, the public treated him with unimaginable disrespect.

Upon leaving the hospital for the first time since his diagnosis, White was not met with concern about his well being, but ignorance, fear, and hatred from his hometown. Without the

proper knowledge that AIDS is solely spread through the exchange of bodily fluids, parents and staff did everything they could to keep Ryan out of school. As the result of an ensuing trial, it was agreed that White would use a separate restroom, not participate in gym class, drink out of a separate water fountain, and use disposable eating utensils and trays at lunch. Despite such extreme and unnecessary measures, the parents of twenty students pulled their children from Ryan's school, sending them to a new institution they created themselves ("Ryan White").

Unfortunately for White, the endless discrimination against him had only just begun. He soon became the target of jokes and lies about him biting people and spitting on lunch food. Restaurants threw away his dishes and students vandalized his locker with pejorative, anti-gay slurs. The bigotry became violent when a bullet was fired through one of White's home windows (White). In a speech before the President's Commission on AIDS in 1988, White stated, "I was labeled a troublemaker, my mom an unfit mother and I was not welcome anywhere. People would get up and leave so they would not have to sit anywhere near me. Even at church, people would not shake my hand." In his small hometown of Kokomo, Indiana, White became an outcast. As this case was the first public report of a child with AIDS ("*Ryan White*"), the public was highly skeptical over any information released about the transmission of AIDS, and White lacked public figures he could emulate.

In spite of the public's firm intolerance, Ryan and his family maintained remarkably hopeful about the future of education surrounding HIV/AIDS. White remarked in his book, *Ryan White: My Own Story*,

It was difficult, at times, to handle, but I tried to ignore the injustice because I knew the people were wrong. My family and I held no hatred

for those people because we realized they were victims of their own ignorance. We had great faith that, with patience, understanding, and education, my family and I could be helpful in changing their minds and attitudes around. (“Ryan White”)

Ryan and his family possessed a will to support and educate others that knew no bounds. After years of facing unimaginable discrimination, the Whites were determined to eliminate the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS in order to drastically improve the quality of life for those suffering from the same disease.

The first cases of AIDS were reported in the early 1980’s among previously healthy, gay men. Before 1982, the disease was called GRID, or gay-related immune deficiency syndrome (*The AIDS Crisis*.) Its association with the homosexual community and unsterile sharing of injection needles, to some extent, lessened people’s fear of the diseases’ spread amongst the general public. However, it also gave figures in the Christian Church reason to believe that White was being punished for immoral behavior. A religious woman commented to his mother, Jeanne, “You know, Ryan wouldn’t have AIDS if he went to my church” (*The AIDS Crisis*).

Eventually, AIDS began spreading to people who had received blood transfusions, like White, and heterosexual women. Consequently, those who hadn’t initially believed White were beginning to give him a chance. With increased attention from celebrities and talk shows, he became a spokesperson about AIDS to anyone who would listen (“*The AIDS Crisis*”).

Throughout the late 1980’s White made many public appearances on television, the red carpet, and even the White House. In 1988, he spoke before The President’s Commission on AIDS about the struggles he’d faced, including the disease’s financial burden and societal reactions. It

was a moving testimony that influenced the public's perception of HIV/AIDS greatly. This became apparent in the following years when the number of people who became less worried about the societal consequences of seeking medical attention increased considerably (*Ryan White*). White's next major public appearance occurred in 1989 when ABC released the movie, *The Ryan White Story*. Depicting the difficulty and oppression he faced throughout his life, the movie provoked sympathy from the public. More people became aware of the real ways in which AIDS spreads and, therefore, took more sensible measures to protect themselves ("Ryan White").

After White's death on April 8, 1990, his mother created "The Ryan White CARE Act", which was signed on August 18, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. It provided more than two billion dollars to aid cities, states, and community-based organizations in developing and maintaining coordinated and comprehensive systems of diagnosis, care, and treatment of patients with HIV/AIDS (Markel).

As asserted in "The AIDS Crisis," young Ryan White became "a symbol of the nation's fear and hostility toward people with AIDS" in the early eighties. However, after dedicating his life to providing the public with accurate knowledge on the spread of AIDS, he became a symbol of education, devotion, and positive change. Ryan inspired thousands of Americans to seek medical treatment for their HIV or AIDS and contributed immensely to the decrease in bigotry of HIV/AIDS patients. Today, about 1.2 million people in the U.S. are infected with HIV. Thanks to an increase in education on AIDS and the Ryan White CARE Act, millions of Americans are living safer lifestyles and are provided with proper systems of AIDS diagnosis and treatment.

Although more than 34 million people have died from AIDS since its discovery in the early eighties, Ryan White's activism was indispensable in fighting bigots who saw AIDS as punishment

for gay men and drug users. Moreover, he demonstrated how the national blood supply needed to be fixed, so that every donation was tested for HIV. Ryan may not have chosen the life he was dealt with, but he fought vigorously until his death in order to ameliorate the lives of the thousands of other Americans fighting this relentless disease alongside him.

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**Two Arguments on *Into the Wild*:  
Was Chris McCandless's Life an Act of  
Heroism or Hubris?**

<p>Alexandria Lamprou Ms. Wheeler English 11R 14 November 2016</p>	<p>Scott Oatkin Ms. Grande English 11 R 14 November 2016</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Into the Wild: A Courageous Journey</i></p> <p>In <i>Into the Wild</i> by Jon Krakauer, a journalist and climber from Seattle, investigates how a young man named Chris McCandless makes the decision to tramp across the country and eventually settle in the Alaskan bush. There is much speculation over Chris and the events leading up to his death in Alaska. People disagree on whether or not the young man was prideful and rash or courageous for taking a step many of us never could. Although some say that Chris was acting out of hubris when he went into the Alaskan bush, I believe he was courageous but misjudged because of his age and family standings.</p> <p>Chris McCandless stood on two fundamental principles: respect and honesty. When he discovered that his father had been lying to him about the family he had with his ex-wife, Chris felt betrayed: "The boy could not pardon the mistakes his father had made as a young man... the deception committed by Walt and Billie made his 'entire childhood seem like fiction'" (Krakauer 122-123). He had lived his whole life thinking one way only to discover in his twenties that it had all been a lie. Can you imagine what that would be like? This</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chris McCandless: A Man of Extreme Hubris</p> <p>In <i>Into the Wild</i>, Jon Krakauer writes the story of Chris McCandless, a man who dropped everything to pursue a life of solitude. No longer could he bare the burdens of the world around him, so he chose to flee to Alaska and begin a sustenance-based lifestyle in the wilderness. Though he frames the journey as a courageous trek on the path to personal growth, ultimately it is Chris pursuing a selfish dream without considering its effects on those around him. Chris is a condescending and arrogant individual, and both his personal actions and the underlying philosophy motivating his odyssey lead to the conclusion that Chris McCandless was more a man of extreme hubris than one of courage.</p> <p>The arrogance of Chris McCandless is evident in the way he is characterized through his actions both making his way towards Alaska and how he handles situations while he is there. He believes himself to be unstoppable, beyond even the chaos of the wilderness. As he approaches the Alaskan Interior, he rejects the help of Jim Gallian, who offers him more suitable equipment, and assures him that he was "absolutely</p>

discovery and a growing resentment towards his parents is what prompted Chris to leave his life behind and travel the country on his own. This in itself is a courageous act; Chris stood up for himself and what he deserved. He decided that the way he had been treated was not acceptable and he made a change. Most of us stay in our routines and areas of comfort, even through mistreatment and dissatisfaction because we're too scared to make a change like he did. McCandless took a stride that many of us never will. Not only was it courageous to leave his life in the first place, but everyday it took courage to live on his own, to get rides from strangers, and to leave everyone that he made the slightest connection with along the way. The testaments of the people he left further prove Chris's honorable character. Wayne Westerberg, a man that he worked for in South Dakota along his travels, quoted Chris as "the hardest worker" he'd ever seen; he said that "if he started a job, he'd finish it... he set pretty high standards for himself" (Krakauer 18). Ronald Franz, a man that deeply bonded with Chris, wanted to adopt him as his grandson. Everyone that Chris touched regarded him as intelligent and respectable; he was well liked. He was obviously ahead of his time in maturity and understanding of the world. This was demonstrated when, during his high school years, he would deliver food to the homeless: "So he [Chris] spent ten bucks on a big bag of hamburgers, and we drove around handing them out to smelly guys sleeping on grates" (Krakauer 114). The young man had more character than many realize.

Christopher McCandless came from a relatively well off family. When people came to understand this along with the falling out between him and his father, they labeled him as another rich kid who threw a

positive [he] won't run into anything [he] can't deal with" (Krakauer 6). With the use of the phrase "absolutely positive," Chris shows an incredibly overzealous and practically naive perspective about the very dangerous task he is facing. He does little to acknowledge the difficulty of his goal, and constantly overestimates what he is capable of. When Chris finally begins his time in Alaska this theme continues, particularly after the botched-butchered of the moose. As maggots gathered and ruined the meat, McCandless expresses regret by calling it "one of the greatest tragedies of my life" (Krakauer 167). This mistake is just another example of how Chris expects nature to contort to his will; he just acts and hopes for the best, completely disrespecting the harshness of nature. Secondly, Krakauer intentionally emphasizes how unprepared Chris was for the Alaskan trek repeatedly throughout the novel. One example of this is in the first chapter, when Krakauer explains how insufficiently geared Chris was: "Alex admitted that the only food in his pack was a ten-pound bag of rice. His gear seemed exceedingly minimal for the harsh conditions of the interior," (Krakauer 5). Furthermore, Chris brought a small hunting rifle that would only be capable of killing small game and he "lacked equipment deemed essential by Alaskan hunters," (Krakauer 180). Only someone who either lacked the understanding of nature's severity, or disregarded it entirely, would be capable of being so immensely ill-prepared. But many along Chris' path to Alaska, including Jim Gallian and Wayne Westerberg, warned him of just how foolhardy this decision would be. The only conclusion which can be made is that Chris McCandless actively ignored the advice of those who were more knowledgeable than himself out of arrogance, presuming that he would be



temper tantrum because he didn't get his way. They saw him as young and prideful to leave over the disagreement. They tacked words onto his personality: shallow, reckless, immature, selfish, arrogant, entitled. Responses to Krakauer's article in *Outside Magazine* expressed readers' disapproval for McCandless, addressing how he was not different from any other lonely death in the wilderness. The letters placed him in a box with other people who had ran out of their depth in an effort to escape their problems. People associated him with people like Carl McCunn. Carl McCunn was a Texan lacking wherewithal who had a plane drop him in the alaskan wilderness. Carl was not all there most of the time: "But there was side to him that was a little bit dreamy, a little bit out of touch with reality... he liked to party hard... he had the tendency to wing it sometimes, to act impulsively, to get by on bravado and style" (Krakauer 81). When he was dropped in the wilderness, he never arranged for a plane to pick him back up; he just assumed that someone would eventually come looking for him after he was gone for long enough. He also tossed his ammunition into a lake and raised the wrong signal when a plane flew overhead of him while he was in the wilderness. This plane could have been his way out but he never read the back of his hunting license and ended up giving the signal for OK. McCunn was young and dull-witted. It is unfair to place Chris in the same category as the Carl McCunns of the world. Not all young men of established families are stereotypically ostentatious and doltish. If Chris had been older or of a different financial standing, then it is my belief that fewer people would have passed judgement on him.

As aforementioned, people label Chris as arrogant and out of his depth. Using his death as

able to manage in the Alaskan wilderness even with a low amount of preparation. Though it could be said that such an action is bold, showing courage by heightening the stakes, but the reality is that this decision was made out of overconfidence and the idea that Chris could overcome any sort of adversity. Chris failed to realize that he is fallible and capable of error. The actions of McCandless, especially his deliberately minimal preparation despite the objections from others and demonstrated overconfidence, attest to the incredible hubris which leads him to his end.

Chris McCandless does not only demonstrate arrogance through his actions; fundamentally, much of his philosophy and character is built upon excessive pride, and often condescension. In his own personal journals, he openly expresses how he sees himself with a higher authority than that of the masses. One particular entry demonstrates his views on the world: "No longer poisoned by civilization he flees, and walks alone upon the land to be lost in the wild," (Krakauer 163). The particular diction in this sentence, mainly with the words "poison" and "flees," implies to the reader that Chris regarded himself as an outsider to society, and negatively impacted by those within it. Hence civilization as a whole would be seen as toxic to him; it was corrupting by nature. But, this sort of ideology is condescending toward each unit of the civilization that he is denouncing. Civilization, collectively, makes up an overwhelming majority of the human population, and this statement explicitly calls all of that majority poisonous. A pillar of his philosophy is thereby rooted in hubris. Supplementing this is another instance where Chris openly disparages his fellow McDonald's coworkers, referring to them as "plastic people" (Krakauer 43). McCandless segregates himself

evidence, they make Chris out to be naive in his expedition to Alaska. Critics claim that McCandless ran into the bush to escape his responsibilities with little knowledge of how to survive and that this lack of knowledge cost him his life, like it cost Carl McCunn his. This is a false claim because Chris did indeed survive in the wilderness on his own, he did this for over one-hundred days before his death. His cause of death, which many believed was a mixup of poisonous and edible plants, was actually more likely a mold which had grown on the seeds he was eating. It was a mistake that many an experienced woodsman could have made. The blunder that had been painted as an idiotic error was really a tragic mistake. Chris McCandless's life was a tragedy. He was not just another arrogant boy who died of his own accord.

Christopher Johnson McCandless, also known as Alexander Supertramp, took hold of his own life and decided to live deliberately. With a surplus of literature, a bag of rice, a rifle, and the clothes on his back, he walked into the wild. He expected that he may never return; he knew the weight of what he was about to do, but he was determined to live his life how to wanted to, to find answers in the beauty of the world. Many say that Chris's hubris is what pushed him into the wilderness, that he died because of his arrogance; I believe that he was like any one of us trying to follow a dream, that he just wanted to live with purpose. McCandless died mournfully but with honor.

from these people with this description, and quits his job after he "grows tired of them." Such an insult proves how Chris holds himself in higher esteem than the average individual. Together these examples exemplify how Chris McCandless is condescending and arrogant by nature, and that the journey he embarked on was built on scorn for others, not a courageous sense of adventure.

The fate of Chris McCandless was an undeniable tragedy, taking the life of a young man still yearning to find himself. Though he had his faults, his heart was pure and his intentions were good, but the fact remains that his actions and creed were plagued with hubris. Some amount of bravery is needed to consider going into the wilderness, but to an even greater extent one needs to believe that nothing can stop them. And this is one trait Chris McCandless had in excess.



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18 April 2016

Historical Analysis:  
Aviation in World War I

War in The Air

Although fairly new back in 1914, airplanes were an attractive prospect for those soldiers living in the trenches of WW I. Many soldiers sent in their applications for the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). There were over 6000 applications, but not all of them could fly. Learning to fly was a tricky endeavor. It would take some people a long time to learn and get the hang of it, but others got used to it quite quickly. Soldiers had to prove to the instructor that they were trained enough to fly the plane “solo.”

The purpose of the airplane during WWI was to undertake reconnaissance in support of ground forces. They would look for new trenches, trains going in any direction, or movement of troops. Pilots would then report what they had seen. In addition to planes for reconnaissance, Germany started using fighter aircraft fitted with machine guns. This gave Germany an advantage, and British troops were shot very badly. Then the British made the SE5, a biplane with two guns. One gun at the top of the plane carried 100 rounds of ammunition. It also carried spare drums in the cockpit. A Vickers machine gun was fired through the propeller by the constant gear, which was an oil-driven gear that stopped it from firing the blades of the propeller off. It was a very difficult process to operate while flying in the air.

It was difficult to be organized while fighting in the air because so many things would be

happening. Anything could happen to you at anytime. The British made a strategy, so they could have an upper hand in battle. They would have to go above the planes of their enemy and dive at the highest possible speed to shoot them down. They would use the term “ace” when a pilot shot at least five enemy aircrafts. As the war went on, airplanes became more and more of an advantage.

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18 December 2016

Historical Analysis:  
The Era of Reform in America

How Did the Reforms in the 1800's Affect Our Nation Today?

As you walk down the streets of Manhattan you notice the tall buildings that seem to touch the sky, the smoke and odors coming from the factories producing the newest fashion, and the men and women rushing to get to work on time with their latte's in hand. New York today is industrialized. It is filled with companies, factories, and businesses that prosper and provide us with our daily needs. However, many times we seem to take for granted the steps it took to get our society to where it is currently. People seem to only notice the bad and do not take note of how far we have come as a nation. The 1800's were a time of reform. People began to stand up for what they believed in. American people began to realize what our country was capable of. Attention was drawn towards expansion and industry and Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous quote, "to be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else" was brought to life.

The reforms that took place in the 1800's made an everlasting impact to America as a whole. Today all women can vote, hold positions in the Supreme Court, and exercise their God-given rights. African-Americans are no longer held hostage in slavery. Every child is entitled to an education and the mentally ill are no longer imprisoned. The improvements and protests that took place during the 1800's paved the road for the future of our society. Emerson once said,

“What is a man born for? But to be a Reformer, a Reformer of what man has made, a renouncer of lies, a restorer of truth and good.” From 1800-1850 people began to focus on uniting society. Still today, it seems that our nation is very sectionalized. Nationalities and ethnicities are discriminated against. Republicans and Democrats are constantly at each other’s throats. However, because of the reforms that occurred during the Antebellum Period we now focus more on ensuring citizens’ constitutional rights.

In the 1820’s, Horace Mann was very concerned that children were not getting the education they deserved. School’s were old and did not contain the proper supplies and equipment to teach the students. Also, in many cases educational facilities were segregated. Mann wanted to end the division between races and provide all students with a proper learning environment. He “began a system in which schools were divided into grade level. He established consistent curricula and teacher training (Chapter 9: Packet).” Mann’s protests eventually led to many public schools being formed that cost no money to attend. Today, all students are entitled to an education and schools are no longer segregated. Many of us take advantage of the fact that we can just wake up and go to school. Without the efforts of Horace Mann in the 1800’s, we may not have the education system we do today. Along with Mann, Dorothea Dix also made a large impact on society. Dix spent a large portion of her life visiting jails. She was exasperated by the conditions of the prisons. She noticed that many of the people in the cells were not guilty of a crime but, rather, were mentally ill. Dix worked to “convince the state to improve prison conditions and create separate institutions for the mentally ill (Chapter 9: Packet).” Because of Dix and her efforts, fifteen hospitals were built for patients with mental disorders. Today, especially with the stress of society, many citizens have anxiety and depressive conditions. Many

people in the past have been afraid to talk about “mental” illness. Without Dix having drawn attention to the problem our society would not be the way it is today. Many innocent people would be put in jail for illnesses they couldn’t control. The issues that were addressed in the 1800’s relate to our present day lives. We are still dealing with discrimination, the consequences of alcohol, and the effects of mental illness. However, if it wasn’t for the Antebellum reformers we would not be where we are as a prospering nation.

As you walk down the streets of New York and look at the bustling stores, you may wonder how the clothes and materials got to the shelves? Many people don’t take time to think that each item they are putting into their cart was made in a factory by laborers and machines. The “Great Awakening” was not only a time of reform but also a time of industrialization. Individuals began to protest working conditions in factories. Many immigrants, women and children were treated unfairly. Women were expected to work from a very young age. The hours were long and the treatment they endured was terrible. Today, we continue to have labor unions that were started in the 1800’s in order to protect our rights as workers. We are ensured a minimum wage and have a limit to the amount of hours we can work. Industry is still a large part of America today. We as a nation rely on the creation of products to fill our stores because we want to make profit. If it wasn’t for the improvements that occurred in factories during the 1800’s, however, we would not be working in the relatively good conditions we are today. Many more of us, instead of working as cashiers in stores, would be sweating over factory machines.

The effects that the “Great Awakening” had on our society will never be forgotten. If it wasn’t for Horace Mann----many of us would not be able to go to school. If Dorothea Dix did not fight for what she believed in----the mentally ill would be in jail. If it hadn’t been for Harriet

Tubman----slavery may still exist. When people think back on the history of our nation many of these individuals names **do not** come to mind. The Antebellum period seems to be somewhat forgotten. However, the reforms that took place in the 1800's continue to affect our society today. We are always trying to improve conditions and exercise the rights of our people. The reformers in the 1800's began the large chain of events that got our nation to where it is today and as we continue to prosper and grow we must continue to thank the "Great Awakening" reformers for their eternal contributions to our society.



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Grace Johnson

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22 December 2016

Historical Analysis:  
The Era of Reform in America

### The Women's Rights Movement

One of the several reform movements that resulted from the second great awakening in the 1830s and 1840s was the Women's Rights Movement. Throughout the mid 1800s leading into the mid 1900s, women had been fighting to gain rights equal to those of men, especially the right to vote. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Catherine Beecher were two women who greatly contributed to the Women's Rights Movement. Although they disagreed on some things, they influenced each other and American Women not only during the 1800s, but also every woman from that point forward.

Beginning in the 1840s, the Women's Right's Movement was mainly focused on "examining the role of women in American Society" (Cayton). During this time many women fought for new rights or freedoms while others decided to fight for change in society from behind the closed doors of their home; this was considered the more traditional way to handle things. In 1840, the World Anti-Slavery Convention was, what some would argue, the beginning of the Women's Right's Movement; this convention was held in London, England. Although the majority of the participants in this convention were male, some women did attend. As the convention continued, they voted that women would no longer be able to take part in the convention. This decision angered many women, especially those who were Americans. When they returned home

to America, they brought that anger with them and began to reform their society. Due to the convention being focused on abolition, or the freeing of slaves, it is safe to say that the Abolition movement of the 1830s caused the Women's Rights Movement (Cayton). As this movement continued, various women stuck out as leaders and reformers. Two very influential women that contributed to the Women's Rights Movement were Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Catherine Beecher.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, probably the most well-known suffragette, was a key contributor to the Women's Rights Movement. Her connection to politics (her father was a Congressman and she was married to an abolition lawyer) gave her the security and knowledge to take part in the Women's Rights Movement (Cayton). As one of the rejected attendees of the World Anti-Slavery Convention, she had due cause to fight for her rights. Stanton is best known her organization of the Seneca Falls Convention, which was the first women's rights convention in United States History, as well as her drafted resolution document called "A Declaration of Sentiments." The most famous of the various resolutions was the ninth resolution, the one that focused on women's suffrage, or our right to vote. The Seneca Falls Convention was the turning point in the Women's Right Movement.

As the Women's Rights Movement progressed, other reformers sprang up. Catherine Beecher was another suffragette who dedicated her life to teaching, helping, and writing. Unlike Stanton, Beecher wanted to improve women's rights beginning at home. She believed that women should influence public affairs indirectly, through their work at home. Beecher wrote *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, which was extremely important because it gave "practical advice and household tips and inspired women to help build a strong American society" (Cayton). Catherine

Beecher was one of the women who disagreed with the ninth resolution in Stanton's Declaration. Beecher was passionate about education, and she encouraged women to improve their knowledge. As of the early 1800s, people began to modify and improve upon education throughout America. The progress that occurred with regards to education directly impacted the Women's Right's Movement. As women became educated, they grew more eager to leave the household and apply their new skills in society. With that knowledge came questioning; women began to question the laws regarding rights as they became able to understand them more clearly (Cayton).

After almost 100 years of reform and persistence, women gained the right to vote on August 26, 1920. It is unfortunate that the original suffragettes did not live to witness the success of their work. The work of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Catherine Beecher affected the lives of every American woman from the mid 1800s to today. Although women have become more equal to men in the eyes of the law, there are still various topics that are controversial with regards to the equality of men and women, particularly equal pay.

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English 10

1 June 2017

Personal Narrative: "This I Believe" Essay

I Believe We All Lie To Ourselves

Until I was in 7th grade, my life had revolved around the military. My dad was a Green Beret in the Army and had to leave every other year. His deployments would last seven months to a year and would get more and more painful the older I got. The pain came from the fact that when I was older, I understood that my dad was going to risk his life and that he might not come back. When I was young, I was able to live in a bubble of carefreeness: just wait, dad will be back soon.

Everyone, and more prevalently military families, deny that anything could go wrong in their family. Yes, extreme and disastrous things can---and will--- happen, just not to my family. My dad was going to fight in a war every other year; he was risking his life, but that fact never registered with me.

It never occurred to me that my dad wouldn't come home one day, not until I saw my mom realizing it. I walked into the living room when I was about seven or eight, and my sister was four and in the other room. I walked in to see my mom kneeling in front of the TV in tears, the news on in front of her. I don't remember what it was saying exactly, but it was about where my dad was. Seeing that fear in my mom's eyes, the woman who was always so strong, made me realize the harsh and terrifying reality of what being a military kid was. After that my dad's

deployments were much harder to get through, but I was determined to keep my sister in the same safe bubble I had been in.

More recently, this Memorial Day, my family got some very jarring and unsettling news. Since my dad was a Green Beret, that means he had one of the hardest and most respected jobs in the army. He retired in 2014, so of course, someone was needed to fill his place. This Memorial Day, my family had to remember and pay our respects to the man who had taken over after my dad. The thought of that being my dad was terrifying. Because of that, my mom has suffered from anxiety, I haven't been able to sleep, my sister is constantly out at her friends to clear her head and keep happy. This man's family is what mine could have been and that idea never crossed my mind. My entire family lied to ourselves and kept ourselves in the dark, so we wouldn't be afraid.

These are just examples of the bubble we all live in. No, my sister won't get in a car wreck driving home, no my parents won't lose their jobs, no my dad will come home. These beautiful lies keep us safe and protected, they keep us happy and unafraid to live, to go out into the world and not be scared you won't make it back home.

Cecilia Chiappini

Ms. Grande

English 11

21 February 2017

Description: A Special Place

### Religion of the Trees

The tall mighty branches of ancient trees fill my view as I walk into the forest. These gentle giants shake quietly letting go of their green leaves with a serenity that I could never muster if letting go of my own children. As these leaves fall upon my skin, their peace is imparted on the places that they touch. They give new birth to me in a way that a baptism never could. I drink in the clean air that is dancing, and radiating away from their ancient souls, of which there are many, though they are harmoniously connected to one another. I feel young in the presence of the trees. For I discovered long ago that the forest is my religion.

I need no stuffy church pews, only the pews made of the naturally fallen warriors of the forest, no deities, only the feeling of something greater, unknown and powerful when I look at the wise old bark in the forest, no scriptures only the illegible writing on bark of the birch trees which I see as the most powerful religious testimony. I feel divine in the forest as if I am a prayer not the one who prays. I am full of good intentions and within me there is only belief. I feel weightless and certain that my destiny is to be part of the forest. The woods teach me that what I once thought of cleanliness was never the reality; the soil is rich and honest and the cleanest of hearts have their roots in the dirt. The dirt I speak of is not full of sorrows, darkness, and misfortune, but of nutrients, and growth.



The rituals of the changing seasons are rituals enough for me. The fiery battles of autumn encourage my inmost passions making my righteous anger spill from every pore of my body; the fallen leaves of the winter scrub my skin clean until it shines like the diamonds forming a glistening crust on the snow. I feel the graceful buds of springtime bless my bare feet with rejuvenation and freedom; the sweltering heat, and matured leaves of summer give me a tour of the omnipresent shelter given by the forest. These ceremonies heal me from the injuries inflicted by my city life for my eyes have become so clouded with greed and materialism. I can only be freed from the industry of the city when I retreat into the shade of selfless forest.

When I lie on the soft woodland floor surrounded by years of decaying leaves, and feel thousands of tiny legged insects crawling under and around me, I do not flinch or feel squeamish; instead, the small movements remind me that I am in a world full of motion and productivity. The tiny movements make me proud to be a part of something so real. The small scurryings of insects and squirrels helps help me to see the way I fit into the natural rhythm of the world. I feel utterly humbled. Though the bugs are small, the impact they make on their world is quite large. To my world I am much smaller than the insects, yet I can also make an impact.

I run and dance and leap through the yellow morning air under a canopy of emerald leaves singing hymns of freedom and harmony. I plunge my feet scarred with soot, ashes and industry into a bubbling creek of holy water. When they emerge they are young, new and whole again. In the air I can taste the truth of my existence. I can know that I do not need to have knowledge of all that the universe offers. That is for me to question but never fully understand. I can simply sink my roots into the earth stretch up to the heavens and grow.

Rachel Pietrow

English 11

Ms. Grande

20 January 2017

RAFT Writing: An Editor Evaluates an  
Author's Choices

### Letter from Your Editor

Dear Ms. Cather,

I just recently finished going over the draft you supplied me with of your latest book, *My Ántonia*, and have a few comments I would like to share with you as your dutiful editor. Firstly, your ability to describe the Western landscape in such a captivating and bewitching way continues to astound me, as does your ability to accurately portray the sentimental feelings accompanied with the past. Also, the themes you address in this novel, including gender and the immigrant experience, are so relevant to the current times that I feel I must applaud you. However, I do have a few pressing questions that we must discuss before we move any further in the publishing of your book.

Many times while reading *My Ántonia*, I marveled at your detailed descriptions of the land and the calm and peaceful mood that those descriptions established. Surely your ability to describe the landscape in this way stems from your first hand knowledge of the Western frontier from the years you grew up and studied in Nebraska (“Willa Silbert Cather”). One particular scene that I am still left thinking about described the afternoons Jim Burden and Ántonia Shimerda spent on the prairie, saying, “All those fall afternoons were the same, but I never got used to them. As far as we could see, the miles of copper-red grass were drenched in sunlight that was stronger

and fiercer than at any other time of the day. The blond cornfields were red gold, the haystacks turned rosy and threw long shadows. [...] That hour always had the exultation of victory, of triumphant ending, like a hero's death--- heroes who died young and gloriously" (Cather 35). The imagery and comparison that you employ to describe fall afternoons on the prairie is truly spectacular and an excellent way to create a serene mood that is intermingled with an appreciation for the beauty the reader can so easily imagine. Well done! As for your ability to accurately describe thinking back on the past, the whole book's mood of sentimentality was established in the introduction when you say, "During that burning day when we were crossing Iowa, our talk kept returning to a central figure, a Bohemian girl whom we had known long ago and whom both of us admired. More than any other person we remembered, this girl seemed to mean to us the country, the conditions, the whole adventure of our childhood. To speak her name was to call up pictures of people and places, to set a quiet drama going in one's brain" (Cather 5). After this discussion, the whole story seems to have a cloud of nostalgia and longing for the past around it.

I'd like to also discuss the theme of gender in your text, Ms. Cather. Being in early 19th century America, gender roles are, obviously, currently strictly defined. You and I both know that men are considered to be the "providers" for the family while women are meant to care for the family (Hall). Therefore, I am so pleased that you have chosen to discuss gender roles in a variety of viewpoints in your book. Especially after the death of her father, *Ántonia* is characterized as a strong woman who works in the fields alongside her brother. Jim dislikes the new person *Ántonia* has become and he complains about how "*Ántonia* ate so noisily now, like a man, and she yawned often at the table and kept stretching her arms over her head, as if they ached" (Cather 99). The

emergence of this strong *Ántonia* shatters Jim's classic expectations of her quietly fulfilling her gender role. The introduction of another main female character, Lena Lingard, allows you to positively describe different tracks that women can take in their lives. While Lena became a successful dressmaker in Lincoln, Nebraska and vowed to never marry, due to not liking "being under somebody's thumb" (Cather 218), *Ántonia* tried to take a more traditional approach at life, before unfortunately being abandoned by her fiancé and having a child out of wedlock. After this "social disgrace", *Ántonia* marries a fellow Bohemian and *together* they work on the prairie. By describing two different female characters who live different lives in a positive manner, you send the message that women can have a variety of dreams and life goals and that is okay.

Another prominent theme in your text is that of the immigrant experience. After the Homestead Act of 1862, an influx of immigrants, both American and international, streamed into the American West for a better life, as you well know having done so yourself (Beetz). All immigrants, no matter their origins, faced loneliness and homesickness upon arrival. As is demonstrated in your work, due to cultural and religious differences and not being able to speak English, international immigrants faced the greater struggle. The Shimerdas were taken advantage of many times before they were able to speak and understand the new language. As if this was not bad enough, racial prejudices also exist, which I am glad you demonstrate in your book. For example, when the Shimerdas and Jim are both at the train station and Jim is reluctant to say hello to the family you write that "Jake nodded at me approvingly and said you were likely to get diseases from foreigners" (Cather 10). This misguided and offensive comment clearly portrays the cruel and unfair stigma surrounding international immigrants.

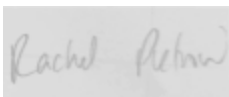
Now, Ms. Cather, I must have a frank conversation with you about something quite

serious. There is one section of the text when you are appallingly racist and I beseech you to change it before the book is published. I am, of course, referring to the section when you describe the African American pianist who visits Black Hawk one evening. You describe his voice has being like “the soft, amiable negro voice, like those I remembered from early childhood, with the note of docile subservience in it” (Cather 144). Not only that, but you claim that he looked as though he was full of “savage blood” at one point (Cather 148). Ms. Cather, I really do not know what to say; from my understanding, this book is supposed to represent the changing times and be inclusive of the variety of paths women can take in life and the diverse mix of immigrants who come to America for a better life. So why does this compassion and understanding not extend to a different race? Am I missing a message that you are trying to send about Jim Burden’s ignorance? Please let me know.

I have one last question for you. I imagine the character of Jim Burden is based off you, Ms. Cather. Between his role as the protagonist and the similarities between the locations you both lived and studied in, moving from Virginia to Nebraska and studying in Lincoln, Nebraska, I’d say this is a fair assumption (“Willa Silbert Cather”). So, therefore, I feel I must ask the question, why make the main protagonist a white male? Are you worried that no one will be interested in a book written by a woman in a woman’s perspective? Or are you simply curious at how a white male would view the changes surrounding women and different ethnic groups at this time?

Please get back to me with your responses.

Your Editor,



Ms. Rachel Pietrow

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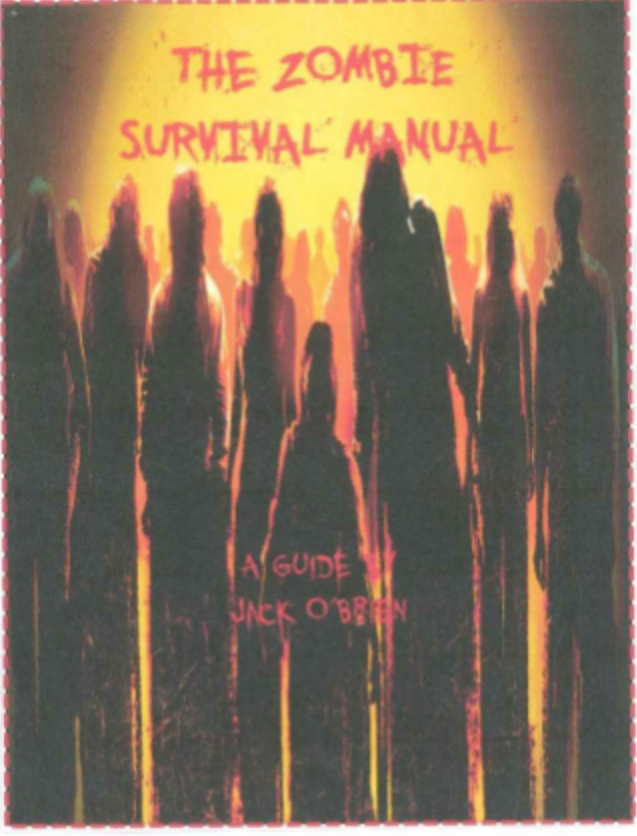
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Jack O'Brien  
Ms. Green  
English 12R, April 2017

RAFT Writing:  
An Apocalyptic How-To Manual

The Zombie Survival Manual

<p>ABOUT THE AUTHOR</p>  <p>Jack O'Brien has been fighting the zombie threat since the beginning. During his service in the US Coast Guard, he was stationed on a ship that was secretly carrying the only sample of the Solanum Virus. Despite the efforts of O'Brien and the rest of the crew, the virus was delivered to land and released. Since then, O'Brien formed the Zombie Outbreak Response Team and has been researching the zombies and the virus. Due to the rapid spread of the virus, O'Brien and his team have since shifted their focus on stopping the virus to preparing and educating the world before a full zombie breakout occurs.</p>	
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## INTRODUCTION:

### WELCOME TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE!

The only thing scarier than the Zombie Apocalypse is not being prepared for it. This guide from the ZORT (Zombie Outbreak Response Team) should be used in preparing for the impending doom. A zombie outbreak is imminent, and you need to be ready for when it does. While this guide will not tell you every tiny detail and tip you should know, it will help prepare you on a basic level for the threat that is looming. So, before it's too late, start preparing yourself now so you don't end up as one of them!



## ZOMBIES:

### ABILITIES AND BEHAVIORS

Zombies are reanimated via a virus that was recently discovered known as "Solanum". This disease turns the zombie into a near-unstoppable killing machine. It shuts down most the major organs, leaving the brain to control the zombie on its rampage. Therefore, the only way to stop a zombie is to destroy the brain. Any other blow or attack to another part of the body will only leave a mangled pile of body parts that will continue to crawl.

Zombie, due to their decaying nature and decreased brain function, have very limited motor control. They will move very slowly – but don't let this fool you; everything will seem like it is moving in fast-forward when one attacks you. Still, zombies have little mobility. They cannot run, and can only move at a slow shuffle. Zombies cannot swim, but because they no longer use their lungs, they can survive underwater. Should the zombie become bloated, it can float, but this is unlikely. Zombies have heightened senses – they can see in the dark, they have exceptional hearing, and they can smell. They are attracted by loud noises and light, and will flock to where other zombies are.

Most importantly, ZOMBIES CANNOT FEEL PAIN!



## WEAPONS & FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

It is recommended to carry at least 5 weapons (this number will vary based on the size of your group). First, you will want some sort of blade. A machete will be your best option, as it will serve as a weapon against zombies, as well as a tool in your quest to survive. A knife can prove useful as a tool, but is often ineffective as a weapon, depending on its size. Second, you will want a heavy, blunt object that will have the ability to crush a zombie's skull in. Something like a club, baseball bat, or pipe would work best for this. Third, you will want a rifle with enough power to pierce a zombie's skull to destroy the brain. Get a rifle that will be easy to find ammo for, and it is advised to get a scope, silencer, and cleaning kit for it. Fourth, while it can be useful but unnecessary is a pistol. It will do what a rifle cannot in close quarters, but most people are not skilled enough to use a pistol effectively. This should only be carried if you are trained. Finally, you will want a weapon that can make a silent kill, to avoid attracting other zombies. If you have a silencer for your gun, then you already have this covered. If not, something like a crossbow with a heavy bolt would be the best option.

As mentioned earlier, zombies can only be killed by destroying their brain. Hacking them up to pieces does nothing and your risk infection by Solanum. Your best option is to put a zombie down quietly and from a distance. Avoid close contact fights if possible, these will be riskier than combat from afar. Avoid doing anything to attract more zombies. Once you have killed a zombie, its corpse should be burned, as to prevent infection.

## SAFE PLACES & ZOMBIE PROOFING

The best place to set up a base is somewhere secluded, in a harsh environment, where food and supplies can be stockpiled. Avoid places where other people will think to go. Start stockpiling now! You never know when an outbreak can hit, and you don't know if you'll be able to get supplies after it starts. Islands are generally the best places to set up as a base due to their seclusion. However, they will be very popular sites for bases, so it will be hard to find one, or defend one you have already claimed. Find somewhere with steep cliffs, large reefs, and limited access. This will prevent zombies and invaders coming ashore. If you are on an island, you will need to have a boat, but keep it hidden onshore as to not attract any unwanted visitors. Make sure you keep it stocked and in good shape in case you need to make an escape.

Avoid places with easy access: stairs, large windows, big doors, etc. Your base should have a perimeter, preferable a concrete or cinderblock wall, with barbed wire and sliding door. Your base should be high off the ground and accessed by ladder, so zombies cannot enter. You should always have a guard posted to keep watch to defend and secure your base. Keep a radio on hand to keep informed of the outside world, but use headphones during use. Try to soundproof your base to avoid attracting zombies. Operate any machinery or appliances in basements or sound-proofed rooms. Make sure your base has an escape route and vehicles available in the event of attack or emergency. Keep your base stocked with things to keep you and your team entertained and sane; you don't know how long you might be there.

Remember: NO PLACE IS SAFE, ONLY SAFER!

## ESSENTIAL ITEMS

The following is a basic list that is necessary for survival. Items and quantities will depend on your location the size of your party, etc.

- Weapons (those mentioned in the previous section)
- Ammunition for weapons
- Knife (no serrated edges)
- Flashlight
- Emergency flares
- Signaling mirror
- Two-Way radio
- Two ways of making fire (matches, lighter, etc.)
- Full quart canteen
- Mess kit
- Hiking or Combat Boots
- 2-3 extra sets of clothing (you will want extra undergarments)
- Bedroll/sleeping bag
- Explosive devices
- Grappling hooks
- 500 ft. of strong, heavy-duty rope
- Binoculars
- Crowbar/Bolt Cutters
- Basic Tool Kit (screwdrivers, saw, hammers, hand drills, wrenches, vice grips, pliers, tape, etc.)
- Hand ax/hatchet & bow saw
- Medical kit (basic first aid supplies, field surgery instruments, antibiotics and ibuprofen, soap)
- Food & Water rations
- Map of area and compass
- Extra batteries
- Shovel (foldable)

## IN THE EVENT OF INFECTION

Because of the nature of the Solanum Virus and the physical make-up of the zombie, the only way to contract the Solanum Virus is through fluidic contact. Solanum is not airborne, that is why it is safe to burn zombies after killing them. It is 100% communicable and 100% fatal. virus can be contracted one of two ways:

First, through a bite. Once a zombie bites into and/or takes a chunk out of one's skin, they will contract the virus. Second (and less dangerous), physical contact with a zombie. Skin-to-skin contact with a zombie will NOT result in infection, UNLESS there is an open wound. If one is splattered by the remains of a zombie, they can become infected as well. Because of the zombie's congealed blood, Solanum is not blood-borne (not until it enters your system at least). Additionally, ingestion of zombie flesh will result in immediate death.

Those infected with Solanum will show symptoms within one hour, starting with pain and discoloration of the bite area, as well as immediate clotting. On average, a person will have less than 24 hours before they die and reanimate. This can vary by more or less time, depending on the person.

If someone has been infected with Solanum, there is no saving them. This can be hard to accept if a loved one or teammate has been infected. If you try to keep the person and help them, it will result in your demise as well. Once a loved one is reanimated, there is nothing of the old them left in their zombified remains. If you want to help your infected loved ones, the only thing you can do for them is kill them via destruction of the brain to prevent them from becoming reanimating as a zombie. This is a grim reality, but it is a sacrifice that must be made in the fight for survival.

FIGHT. DESTROY. SURVIVE. THAT IS YOUR MISSION. GOOD LUCK.

