

Celebrating Writing Student Essay Publication

Composition

at Indiana University East

12th Edition

2011

**Composition
At Indiana University East
2011 - 2012
12th Edition**

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ABOUT FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY EAST

Indiana University East is committed to university-wide writing excellence. The First Year Composition courses are one of the foundational requirements to prepare you for the learning experiences you will have at IUE. Your composition courses are designed to encourage you to extend your range of writing experiences, to explore important questions through writing, and to learn more about yourself as a writer.

This collection is intended as a guidebook for students that offers information on the general structure of the first-year writing program. The guidebook begins with descriptions of the policies, procedures, and course descriptions of the writing program. Following brief descriptions of writing program courses are award-winning essays and composition papers written by first-year writing students. The papers exhibit characteristics of successful writing (organization, development, competent grammar, substantial claims). We chose them because they demonstrate quality writing and address a variety of important issues that can be explored and discussed in class. These student essays, from all first year writing courses, represent a range of writing assignments: analyzing arguments, cultural analysis, positioning within an argument, critique, and self-developed research.

THE CAMPUS LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The Writing Program courses fulfill the Indiana University East student outcome learning objectives. The objectives include:

1. Educated persons should be exposed to a broad variety of academic fields traditionally known as the Liberal Arts (humanities, fine arts, social sciences, natural sciences) in order to develop a critical appreciation of a diversity of ideas and creative expression.
2. Educated persons should have achieved depth in some field of knowledge. A sequential accumulation of knowledge and skills in an academic discipline is essential for a focused personal and professional development.
3. Educated persons should be able to express themselves clearly, completely, and accurately. Effective communication entails sharing ideas through a variety of techniques, including reading, writing, speaking, and technology.
4. Educated persons should be able to relate computational skills to all fields so that they are able to think with numbers. At a minimum, students should be able to carry out basic arithmetical and algebraic functions; they should have a working concept of simple statistics; and they should be able to interpret and use data in various forms.
5. Educated persons should have the ability to develop informed opinions, to comprehend, formulate, and critically evaluate ideas, and to identify problems and find solutions to those problems. Effective problem solving involves a variety of skills including research, analysis, interpretation, and creativity.
6. Educated persons should develop the skills to understand, accept, and relate to people of different backgrounds and beliefs. In a pluralistic world one should not be provincial or ignorant of other cultures; one's life is experienced within the context of other races, religions, languages, nationalities, and value systems.

7. Educated persons should be expected to have some understanding of and experience in thinking about moral and ethical problems. A significant quality in educated persons is the ability to question and clarify personal and cultural values, and thus to be able to make discriminating and ethical choices.

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

One theme explored in W131 is cultural diversity. Broadly defined, diversity includes different beliefs, values, races, nationalities, communities, religions, cultures, social classes, genders, and ages. Diversity encompasses the rich variety of experiences that people bring to W131. It is one of the unifying themes of W131 readings, discussions, and assignments.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Indiana University East recognizes writing as a valuable means for learning across all the disciplines. To ensure a strong foundation for the kinds of writing required in each learning program, students are required to take Elementary Composition within the first 25 credit hours you complete at IUE. Students take a second writing course from among W132, W231, and W270 within the first 50 credit hours.

WRITING PROGRAM COURSE OFFERINGS

The Writing Program at IUE offers a wide range of writing courses developed for meeting the specific needs of students in a variety of course programs. Please refer to the IUE Bulletin & Guidebook for writing course descriptions.

ATTENDANCE

Indiana University has a “no-cut” policy. Further, because many of the writing courses include workshop time, attendance and class participation are essential. Each writing instructor will have a clearly stated attendance policy in the course syllabus. Be aware that excessive absences will have an impact on the final course grade.

GRADING PRACTICES

Each writing instructor will include details about grade calculation on the course syllabus, as well as a description of the course revision policy, paper evaluation method, and final grading procedure. The sample scoring guide below provides a brief overview of what instructors will be looking for in writing. The scoring guide also alerts students to the kind of goals they might have when putting together writing projects.

Sample Scoring Guide for Student Papers

Characteristics of Strong Papers:

- *pieces are substantial and well developed
- *clear statement of paper's purpose
- *strong sense of paper's organization
- *language used creatively/effectively
- *takes risks in style, approach, subject
- *shows when appropriate: creates scenes, dialogue and internal monologue
- *assertions and generalizations supported by evidence, examples, details

- *recognizes complexities in issues
- *paper is touching or powerful

- *evidence of critical thinking
- *pieces are unified and focused
- *aware of the power and uses of writing

Characteristics of Weak Papers:

- *pieces are short, thin, undeveloped
- *no clear statement of paper's purpose
- *little or unclear paper organization
- *language used ineffectively
- *no risks—or risks fail
- *little or no showing: lots of straight uses telling and summary
- *assertions and generalizations unsupported by evidence, examples, details
- *ignores complexities and contexts
- *pieces do not engage readers' emotions
- *little evidence of critical thinking
- *pieces are not unified and unfocused
- *unaware of the power and uses of writing

Scoring Range:

An **excellent** paper: its numerous and significant strengths far outweigh its few weaknesses. It is substantial and original in content (both in length and development) and/or in style.

A **very good** paper: its many strengths clearly outweigh its weaknesses. It engages the material and explores issues, but not to the same extent as in an excellent paper.

A **good paper**: its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. Paper shows genuine intellectual effort and moments of focus, but suggests strong potential rather than actual achievement.

A **fair paper**: strengths and weaknesses are about equally balanced. Some pieces may be too brief or underdeveloped, too general or predictable, but the writing is competent.

A **below average** paper: its weaknesses outweigh its strengths. Usually thin in substance and undistinguished in style but perhaps clear and fairly error free.

A **poor paper**: its many weaknesses clearly outweigh its strengths. It appears to have been put together with little time or thought.

AUTHOR AUTHENTICITY

Plagiarism is using another's facts, ideas and/or words without giving explicit credit to the source in an accepted documentation format (MLA, APA, etc.). It is a violation of academic and legal standards. Penalties for plagiarism vary; they may include receiving a failing grade or being referred for disciplinary action. A double submission (turning in the same assignment for more than one class without the express permission of the instructors) is considered a form of plagiarism. Individual instructors will include specific plagiarism policies in their course syllabi.

Examples of plagiarism:

1. Taking ideas from another author that cannot be considered common knowledge.
2. Summarizing or paraphrasing another author's ideas in such a way that quotation marks are not necessary, but without appropriately crediting that author.
3. Directly quoting phrases, passages, or sentences from another source without identifying the original source.
4. Use of a paper (in part or in whole) written by another person.

NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

All writing classes at IU East require the use of non-sexist language, which means students should avoid any kind of language that reflects a gender bias. Language carries immense power, reflecting and creating the values of a culture. An analogy could be made to racial slurs which, though "acceptable" early in this century when racial tensions were widespread, today are seen as conveying hate, creating ugly stereotypes, and are consequently unacceptable. Gendered language, though more subtle, carries the same power to discriminate and prevent equality. For instance, if we say "the doctor...he" enough, the entire culture will automatically assume doctors are or can only be male, to the detriment of all aspiring women doctors. "Chairman" and "fireman" reflect the same bias, while "girls" used for women and words like "authoress" demean women. Why should we care about the gender of the person doing their job well? When Whoopi Goldberg referred to herself as an "actor" in her acceptance speech for an Oscar for her role in *Ghost*, she was suggesting that words which reflect gender are outmoded.

Some students find gender sensitivity a trivial consideration which makes more work for them but there are many good reasons for being sensitive to sexist language. In fact, those who continue to use sexist language will hurt themselves: people will see them as sexist even if they aren't, and writers using sexist language will alienate readers and lose credibility no matter how good their paper's content is otherwise. Many men are sensitive to such issues, too; it is not simply a women's issue anymore. Language is never stable, and writers have the power to change and eliminate the prejudice imbedded in it.

Writers must keep the following rules in mind:

1. Use gender-neutral titles (firefighter, sales clerk), instead of occupational titles ending with "man" or "woman" (policeman, saleslady).
2. Don't stereotype male-female roles in your language: for example, instead of referring to "mother" in the generic nurturer sense, use "parent."
3. Avoid using the generic "man" and "mankind." Instead use "anyone" or "people."
4. Don't use words or descriptions that demean women ("girls") or are inconsistent with your treatment of men's descriptions: "William Shakespeare" and "Miss Emily Bronte" should simply read "Shakespeare" and "Bronte."
5. Pronouns are especially tricky: the rule used to be to use "he" whenever the gender was unclear but that has changed. Instead of "he" used in a generic sense, either 1) use he/she, 2) change the entire phrase to plural and use "they," or 3) alternate between paragraphs, using "he" in one and "she" in the next.

WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center provides individualized and drop-in-writing consultations for students enrolled in any course at IU East. Students can work with consultants to generate ideas for papers, strengthen coherence, and develop methods for proofreading and editing. Students can also receive assistance with *APA*, *MLA*, and other documentation styles and learn how to conduct research on the Internet. The Writing Center is open throughout the week and during summer sessions.

Online tutoring in writing is available to all IU East students. Online writing consultants can help students improve their writing by evaluating content, document format, and citations.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Support Services (SSS) helps students who qualify for the SSS program, like first generation college students, adjust to and succeed in college. The program provides comprehensive academic assistance and advising services for its students as well as assistance for students with documented disabilities. For more information, contact Student Support Services at (765) 973-8310 or (765) 973-8472 (TTY).

LIBRARY INFORMATION

The IU East Library, located in Hayes Hall, offers many services to IU East students, including access to journals and books on site, through the internet, and through Interlibrary Loan. Basic reference assistance is available on a walk-in basis, with more detailed assistance available by appointment. Students may get a library card or have their student ID activated to borrow items. In addition to books, the library loans videos, CDs, software, video cameras, laptop computers and digital cameras. Many instructors also make course materials available in the library.

AWARD WINNING ESSAYS FOR 2010 - 2011

BOOKSTORE WRITING AWARD

(Academic Essay for W130)

Embracing Technology

Deonda Armentrout

English W130

Instructor Blankenship

June 6, 2011

Embracing Technology

I remember countless hours of my childhood, sitting in an old pew in my papaw's church, and in those formidable years, I began to form opinions of many things. I was a very thoughtful child who worried a great deal about the unknown. One of those unknowns was how the world might end and whether it would happen in my lifetime. I sat through a lot of sermons on the book of Revelations, letting my mind digest all the many scenarios that may or may not happen in my future. Within these scenarios, technology seemed to always play a vital role. I related the progression of technology with the progression towards the end of the world. I began to make assumptions and opinions regarding the role technology would play in such an inevitable end. As I delve into all the assumptions I developed over the years toward technology, I will redefine my way of thinking in regards to the definition of technology, based on just the last few months.

The book of Revelations is the very last book in the Bible and the one that addresses the forces of evil that inhabit the universe. It has always been the one book that I avoid reading. Reading Revelations was and is scary to me. It talks about multi-headed beasts and the sun turning to blood; the things nightmares are made. Like most stories we read or movies we see, there is good and evil involved. The difference is that this book is not a story; for me it is real. Believing in these Biblical truths, taught to me from as far back as I can remember, means stretching the imagination while wondering just how technology will play a part. In modern day scenarios, I believe that technology plays a vital role in the transpiring of Biblical prophecy concerning the end of days. If you consider the way the computer and the television are becoming more and more perverted and if you look at the way everything is becoming

computerized , it all could easily become out of hand. I have often heard family and church members talk about the microchip; it is vital in the future shift in power towards progressively more and more evil control. I say evil control because according to Revelations, this world will continuously progress towards judgment day or the end of the world. Along with that progression, evil will only become more and more prevalent. I just recently learned that we are currently using the microchip for tracking animals. I would assume we have all heard people talk about how this little piece of technology will someday control the human population. Beyond that, I often heard conversations among family and church goers, concerning this particular vice being used as a tool to force everyone to obtain a number or mark, making it impossible to escape control of whoever may come into power, good or bad.

Technological fear, for me, stemmed also from the lack of outside socialization I experienced as a child. I was not given a balance of reality and religion as I grew up. My life revolved around church; I was not allowed to participate in what most would consider normal childhood experiences. Going to the movies or bowling alley or the skating rink was a sin. My father did not allow a television in our house because he felt it was a tool of the devil. On the occasional visit to a family friend's house, back in the 1970's I would have the rare occasion to watch television. As a young child, every single moment left a lasting impression on me. Some of the most memorable television shows pertinent to this discussion were about technology. I remember the excitement I would feel over going to a friend's or neighbor's house that had a television. On one such occasion, I watched a movie where a house was built with a robot that did everything for the family. It started out playing the role of maid, cook, and butler, but quickly it started to take over the house, becoming dangerous and evil. This movie, compounded with my already overactive thought process, created negative misconceptions toward technology.

Growing up in an ultra-conservative environment could have been a bad thing, but for me it became a catalyst for change and improvement, it inspired me to think different, be different. In spite of my uncharacteristically sheltered upbringing, I developed a curiosity for learning about other people's thoughts and opinions. I had a huge fascination with what other people thought and believed and why they believed it. I was determined to learn everything I could about not just my beliefs, but the beliefs of the many others who grew up completely opposite of me. That was my true passion – always has been – to be able to get inside people's heads and discover their definitions of technology, of life, of religion, of happiness. It was during the process of returning to school in the last year that I began to broaden my perceptions of technology and all that it encompasses.

Amazingly, it all began in the spring of 2011 during my freshman English composition class. Our third and final assignment was on technology. I was disappointed by the subject, since I had no idea how I was going to relate this subject to myself and my life. My instructor began to challenge the class to think outside the box. She introduced us to an array of everyday objects that I had never considered to be under the definition of technology, such common things as the pencil or the table and chairs we were sitting on. She wanted us to grasp the far-reaching definition that encompasses technology. As my small English class opened up a dialogue that day, we started to grasp at straws while trying to think of the many facets of technology. We were, then, asked to look up the definition of technology; we were enlightened and surprised. It said, basically, anything that a person is able to improve upon. Based on this knowledge, I now had to change my way of thinking.

Within the chapter on technology, we were required to read an essay. The essay was about language being a technology within itself. We were asked to imagine that we all had word

bubbles above our heads. Within these word bubbles were all the words we had in our particular vocabularies. It was all so abstract and hard for me to grasp. I was frustrated with the absurdity of the examples and the overall meaning of the article. I was not prepared to change my way of thinking this far outside the box. This abstract essay was unlike anything I had ever read and it rearranged the narrow category I had placed technology in, in my mind. The next day, I came to class ready to express just how much I didn't enjoy this particular assignment. How could I go from technology being evil to being word bubbles; and if I could possibly wrap my brain around these polar opposites then would I be changing my whole way of thinking? No sooner than the words came out of my mouth, I was interrupted by the somewhat intimidating wrestler in the corner of the room. He and I had butted heads on several occasions over our opposing views concerning religion and social status. I had read his paper on technology and it had been quite different than my way of thinking. He looked at me and said that he had enjoyed this particular chapter more than any other because it had challenged him. He stated that he was not one of those people who liked things that were easy. This was coming from the one person in class who I felt I needed to prove that I wasn't close minded.

With that particular statement directed at me, I became determined to no longer be that person in this part of my life. It was like a lightbulb went on that I did not know existed. I was more determined than ever to think outside the box. I started to think about technology in terms of the human body itself. I believe, unequivocally, that we were created with a blueprint and a design specific to who we are. It is my firm belief that we are all products of an imaginative, creative, and ingenious Creator. There is no other "Deonda Armentrout". I could not be more unique, if I tried, which I do. Nonetheless, I consider myself the ultimate example of technology; the very blueprint for mankind and all we have accomplished with technology.

As I wrap up this journey I have only begun to embark upon, I am amazed at the wonder and excitement I am starting to experience. Along with this newfound knowledge I have accumulated concerning technology, I have also accumulated a realization that I want to broaden many of my perceptions and assumptions. I want to use technology in its many forms as a positive tool towards good things. Things like education, communication, and self-realization. Not only am I changing my views on technology, I am beginning to realize that I, myself, am the epitome of technology. I am improving upon my very self. It is my intention to proceed towards a brighter future utilizing every ounce of technology along the way. I can no longer put a negative spin on this once feared connotation. For, it now defines who I am, where I am going, and just how I will get there.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WRITING AWARD

(Analysis, Critique, or Position Paper for W131)

To Live Forever:

Positive or Negative?

Audra Yoshikane

English 131

Instructor Blankenship

December 18, 2010

To Live Forever:

Positive or Negative?

Have we, as human beings, ever looked around and really wondered at the skills we have at our fingertips? These skills are not limited to what can be done directly with our hands or our words, but extend to the multitudes of technologies which we have created throughout the centuries. We use these skills and technologies for everything in our daily lives, from dressing in the morning with our hands to the vast variety of computers most employers and individuals utilize. Our skills allow us to perform basic tasks and when we couple them with technology we can perform exceptional tasks. What if, one day in the future, a new technology is created which will take us from exceptional to incomprehensible? Scientists around the world have been working on technological projects which will do just that. From cloning to full body sensor tracking to nanorobots, humans are bridging the gap between death and an ever elusive goal: to live forever.

Cloning was once an unthinkable path to creating life, if not specifically eternal life. Now, this once unimaginable idea is not only being imagined, but it is being attempted. With current research, we can now speculate about possible implications should experiments succeed. Eternal life may be one such possibility. After one's birth, a sample of blood would be saved. Later, when the body declines severely enough, a clone would be made. The older body would be responsible for mentoring the younger body, passing along everything learned in life. Humans would no longer need to reproduce, since they would merely duplicate and then raise themselves. So far, successful biological cloning appears to be having more downs than ups, however, thus cloning is not the only effort being made to artificially reproduce humans. Microsoft has created one such line of technology with a new program for the XBOX gaming console: the Kinect sensor. With this program the "Kinect sensor utilizes revolutionary full-body tracking to put you in the center of the fun. This amazing new technology allows the sensor to recognize your body

and mirror your movements in the game, making you the controller” (XBOX website). Using a reverse-holograph technology, an accurate copy of the player is scanned, then uploaded onto the game console and finally into the games which are compatible with the Kinect sensor.

Unfortunately, as amazing as biological cloning and holographic technology are, neither actually extends a human life. Microsoft, however, does seem to be on the right track, combining humans and their Kinect sensor. The next logical step would be to combine computers, humans and mechanical technology.

Nanorobot technology is the most popular and fastest growing mechanical technology at this time. According to Raymond Kurzweil (2000) “a shot full of nanobots will someday allow the most subtle details of our knowledge, skills, and personalities to be copied into a file and stored in a computer” (p. 388). Essentially, the nanorobots will scan every aspect of a brain and the information will be uploaded to a computer. A virtual replica of a person will be created and maintained as long as the file is never destroyed. If holographic technology, such as the Kinect sensor, keeps pace with nanorobots, after a person is uploaded, a holographic image could be produced. These two technologies combined seem to create the illusion of eternal life, so appealing to some. This holographic image would be similar to projections seen in previous science fiction shows. (i.e. the 1960’s television series Star Trek and the 2009 film GI Joe: Rise of the Cobra). After the one dies the holographic image would no longer be a projection of a real being, but simply a memory of what was uploaded on the computer while he or she lived. Even though nanorobot technology takes us one step further than cloning, the ultimate goal of eternal life remains elusive. The solution, then, is to take yet another step with technological combinations and add robotics.

Bicentennial Man (1999) and I, Robot (2004) are two examples of how robot technology can, and possibly is, evolving. A full functioning, life size robot implanted with a computer chip containing an uploaded file of a person's brain, procured by nanorobots, and would be the key to one form of eternal life. Robotic technology will of course not be available to the masses in its beginning stages, if ever. It seems most likely, though, that the rich and powerful will be the ones with the ability to utilize this technology. This would create positive and negative effects, since rich and powerful people do not always make decisions based on what would be best for the world.

On the positive side, in the future researchers, such as Albert Einstein, could strive to have themselves uploaded to a computer, so in generations to come students would be able to research a topic and have their questions answered directly by the research leader. Additionally a replication of a non-bias, rational, forward-thinking leader would benefit their constituents as an advisor after their term of service and natural life had ended. The type of leader a country's citizens would desire to maintain. On the negative side, though, history changing researchers and admirable leaders are not the only people with wealth and power. If [Kim Jong-II](#), the dictator of North Korea, had the ability to technologically clone himself, he would never have to give up his power. He would rule North Korea forever; taking away any future chance that North Korea could alter political practices.

Establishing appropriate protocol for use of this technology might reduce the chances of misuse. For example, an individual could be scanned onto a computer only if their natural life span was coming to an end, if he or she had held or is currently holding a position of power, or the individual accomplished a world changing project. Leadership roles would be required to be passed on in the same manner they would have been if the person had lived a normal life span or

served the full time allotted to the position. Because humans are clever, it seems as though any law can be broken. If one only has enough money and power, a way around laws can be found. Regulations for this technology would be exposed to the same threats as those which are currently in place for the technologies already in existence.

Sherry Turkle (2001) states “the question is not what computers can do or what will the computer be like in the future, but instead, what will we be like? What kind of people are we becoming as we develop increasingly intimate relationships with machines?” (p. 381). As we continue to create technologies which allow us to live longer, we at the least create a world in which we are dependent on those technologies. Having the ability to live longer or at most forever, for some, such as John von Neumann father of the Modern Computer ([Lafayette 2008](#)) and John Lennon, means these men would be able to see the long term effects of their work. If these individuals and others of their caliber had had the opportunity to be uploaded to a computer, their work, their ideas, and their theories would influence our world in new, currently unimaginable directions. The idea of these people living forever is exciting, but we must remember that the noble, inspiring and helpful history-makers would not be the only individuals with access to this technology.

Imagine if Adolf Hitler would have been able to upload his mind to a computer and then make a robot copy of himself. Would he have been happy with merely one copy or would he have wanted several, allowing him to be in more than one place at a time? If individuals similar to Hitler were able to mechanically clone themselves, the world would quite possibly spiral down into darkness. With this knowledge, the idea of a robot equipped with a computer chip may not sound so appealing. One has to wonder, would the positive and negative characteristics of a person extend forever or those characteristics evolve in the same way a natural brain would

throughout a person's life? Would a robotic copy of Gandhi or Mother Teresa be able to act and choose in freedom like a natural brain?

Howard Markey (1979) says "indeed, if wisdom be considered as encompassing all things of the spirit and technology as including all things material, then wisdom and technology are all there is for man as he reaches for the good life" (p. 285). If a technology is created which enables us to live forever, do we have the right to utilize it if we do not yet possess the wisdom to control it? With recent advances in technology we can talk to a person on the other side of the world while stuck in traffic; play a video game with no controllers; and change our perspective on death. What is the benefit of these technologies? Has having the ability to talk to anyone, anywhere, and at anytime strengthened our relationships with our neighbors or family members; could removing controllers for video games actually be taking away one of the few positive aspects of video games: the development of hand-eye coordination; and while living for some means making their world the best for themselves and anyone they come in contact with, others do the exact opposite. If we are going to allow individuals to live forever, with either a real human body or a robotic body, we must first to learn how to live positive and enriching lives during the seventy or so years we currently possess.

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HFA DIVISION WRITING AWARD

(Research project for W132)

To Text and Drive or Not To Text and Drive: That Is the Question

Mariah Marshall

Indiana University East

Abstract

While drivers in today's society are subject to many types of distractions while they drive, text messaging while driving presents an especially alarming type of distraction, especially for teens. In fact, if a teen texts while driving, that teen takes focus off the road for forty percent of the time that he or she is behind the wheel. Even though most teens seem to understand the extreme distraction and danger of texting while driving, the majority of teens continue to take part in this hazardous trend. This paper describes some of the accidents that have occurred because of texting while driving, and explains why texting while driving has been portrayed as the most distracting activity to take part in while behind the wheel. This work also illustrates the fact that although teens realize the danger of texting while driving, they continue to take part in the unsafe activity because they believe that they are effectively skillful at it. This paper gives a report of laws that have been passed that ban texting while driving. It goes on to claim that education and awareness building, paired with legislation, are the most effective means of decreasing the fatal habit of text messaging while driving among teens.

To Text and Drive or Not To Text and Drive: That Is the Question

Drivers in today's society, especially teenagers, are faced with many distractions along America's roadways. Recent research in Australia has led to the discovery that, normally, teenagers are distracted by the car radio, road signs, or their surroundings. These various distractions sidetrack teenagers about 10 percent of the time that they are driving—a considerable percentage of time. Add text messaging while driving to the mix, however, and the story is quite different. Teenagers who text and drive take their focus off the road for forty percent of the time they are driving ("Texting Fails Road Test," 2007, p. 14). Most teenagers who text and drive even realize that they are being distracted, and that they are creating extremely dangerous conditions for all motorists; however, they do not think twice before picking up the phone. Therefore, because teenagers understand that their actions have dangerous potential consequences, yet continue to text and drive, extensive steps should be taken to reduce the teen trend of texting while driving.

There are countless stories of traffic accidents that have all been caused by the same thing: text messaging while driving. Some of these accidents, such as one in Wellman, Texas, have even caused death. As maintained by T.J. Chrastil (2011), a reporter for the Syracuse Journal-Democrat, a Texas teenager named Alex Brown lost her life in a tragic accident that was due to text messaging while driving. On the morning of November 10, 2009, Alex was texting four friends on her way to school, an act that significantly impacted her driving speed—it was determined that she had been going seventy-three miles per hour in a sixty mile per hour zone. The distraction of text messaging while driving and the consequential high speed of her vehicle was enough to cause Alex to have an accident, one that turned out to be fatal. After Alex's accident, she was airlifted from the accident scene, and she later died at the hospital (p. 1).

Text messaging while driving has proven to be dangerous not just to the teenager who is driving, but also to other drivers and even pedestrians. *Eagle Tribune* reporter Jim Patten (2011) has reported that a recent accident in Massachusetts resulted in a fifteen-year-old boy being struck by a driver—one who was texting and driving simultaneously. Sixteen-year-old Aureo Alicea was text messaging while driving when he hit the fifteen-year-old boy, who was at the time attempting to cross the street (para. 6).

As this case illustrates, teens who text message and drive endanger not only themselves by their actions, but also those around them.

It is exceedingly clear that text messaging while driving has the potential to cause dangerous roadways and numerous accidents. Also apparent are reasons *why* the act has such threatening potential. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (2011), there are three main types of distraction when it comes to driving: visual (taking one's eyes off the road), manual (taking one's hands off the wheel), and cognitive (taking one's mind off what one is doing). The website has declared, "While all distractions can endanger drivers' safety, texting is the most alarming because it involves all three types of distraction" (p. 1).

Matthew Romoser tends to agree. Romoser, senior researcher at the Human Performance Lab of the University of Massachusetts, has claimed that texting while driving is the most distracting activity to take part in behind the wheel. As noted by Romoser, just using a cell phone while driving increases the chance for an accident four to six times—this is comparable to the risk that intoxicated driving causes. On the other hand, text messaging while driving increases the chance of an accident by *twenty* times. In regard to these numbers, Romoser asserted, "So one could make the argument that texting while driving actually makes you more dangerous than intoxicated driving" (as cited "Don't Text, or Drink, Behind the Wheel," 2010, p. 14).

There is another fact that demonstrates the danger that text messaging while driving presents: the act of text messaging while driving causes a driver to take his or her eyes off the road for an extensive period of time. Sherri Box (2009), a spokeswoman for the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), has reported that in one of its studies, the VTTI found that text messaging while driving causes an individual to take his or her eyes off of the road for 4.6 seconds during a 6-second interval. Box reported that during this time of not focusing on the road, a driver could travel the entire length of a football field at fifty-five miles per hour (p. 2). It is no wonder that text messaging while driving causes such a large number of accidents and death. Those who text and drive are spending enormous amounts of time *not* looking at the road that they are driving on!

In the face of so much evidence that text messaging while driving is dangerous and life threatening, one may question whether teenagers realize that they are causing this danger with their

actions. Interestingly, some teenagers have claimed to recognize that the act of texting while driving is a significant danger, but they also admit to taking part in the activity. The results of a recent personal survey of one English class at Indiana University East show this fact. Of the sixteen teenage students surveyed, only one reported that he or she had never sent or received a text message while driving. In addition, thirteen of the sixteen teenagers confirmed that they had texted while driving in the last week. Fascinatingly, all but one of the sixteen teens surveyed answered yes when asked if they believe that texting while driving is a significant danger to themselves and others on the road. These results clearly contradict each other. Teens admit that they text while driving, but then claim to realize the potential dangerous consequences of their actions.

Since it has been shown that many teenagers do admit that texting while driving is dangerous, some individuals may then speculate as to why some teenagers continue to text and drive. The answer, most likely, is that although these teens believe that text messaging while driving is unsafe, they do not believe that texting and driving is dangerous for *them* specifically. An example of someone with this type of thinking is Chelsea, a teenage girl who was a guest on the Dr. Phil show. As stated on the Dr. Phil website, Chelsea claimed, "I don't feel afraid that I'm going to get into a car accident while texting because I feel like I'm a good enough texter." On the show, Chelsea noted that a "good texter must be able to text with one hand, one finger. They have to be able to text in under 30 seconds with T9 word and without looking at the phone" ("Shows and Video," 2007, p. 1). Apparently, Chelsea considers herself to be a "good texter," because she has these self-stated qualifications. However, her driving record shows that even a "good texter" makes mistakes when it comes to texting and driving. Chelsea has had four serious traffic violations in just four months of having a driver's license. Chelsea has hit a curb, causing three thousand dollars worth of damage to her vehicle. She has nearly struck an individual with her vehicle, because she was distracted by her phone. She has received a ticket for going eighty miles per hour in a fifty-five mile per hour zone because she was texting and did not notice a speed limit change. Finally, she has run into a guardrail because she was texting while driving (p. 3).

Because of teenagers like Chelsea (those who refuse to end their habit of text messaging while driving), a number of states have passed laws banning texting and driving. According to the Governors Highway Safety Association (2011), thirty-one states, Washington D.C., and Guam have each passed

legislation that bans text messaging while driving statewide for *all* drivers. Moreover, nine additional states have outlawed text messaging for novice drivers. Indiana is one of those states; it bans text messaging while driving only for drivers who are eighteen years of age or younger (p. 1). At least one state that has not passed legislation that would outlaw text messaging while driving statewide, the state of Ohio, is currently in the process of doing so. William Hershey (2011), a reporter for the *Dayton Daily News*, has described the steps that the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate are taking to pass a bill that would ban texting and driving throughout the state of Ohio. In the words of Hershey, "A violation [of the texting while driving law] would be a minor misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$150" (p. 1). According to Emily Holbrook (2009) of *Risk Management*, there has even been a proposition for a national bill that would ban drivers nationwide from texting while driving (p.16).

It seems that individual states and the nation as a whole have come to understand the danger associated with the distraction of texting while driving, and have realized the need to stop the trend. However, in light of constant reports of accidents caused by text messaging while driving, these laws may not be enough to curb the deadly habit that so many teens have become accustomed to. Further steps, such as methods that raise awareness about the dangers of texting and driving, and education regarding prevention of texting while driving, need to be taken in addition to the passage of laws.

The parents of one previously mentioned teenager, Alex Brown, realized this fact after their daughter was involved in that fatal 2009 accident that was caused by texting and driving. Alex's father, Johnny Mac Brown has said the following: "Lots of states have laws against texting and driving. Those laws are not going to stop you from texting while you're driving. That's your decision" (as cited in Chrastil, 2011, para. 13). Since their daughter's accident, Johnny Mac and his wife, Jeanne Brown, have realized the significance of this decision that teens must make at some point—the decision whether or not to text and drive. Therefore, according to Chrastil (2011), the parents of Alex Brown "have been speaking across the country about the dangers of texting while driving." A recent stop for the Browns was Nebraska's Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca High School on April 5, 2011, where they told Alex's story and challenged the students there to take pledges not to text and drive. Their strategy of raising awareness seemed to work to some extent; a number of students vowed not to text and drive after hearing the Brown's account (p. 1).

As part of educating the public about how to prevent text messaging while driving, the American Automobile Association (AAA) of Colorado (2011) has described tips for both teenagers and their parents. Some tips for teenagers include simply turning the cell phone off, pulling to the side of the road if it becomes necessary to text, and putting the cell phone far enough away that it is unreachable while driving. Another tip for teenagers is to recognize that text messaging while driving may be a habit, and to look to friends for support in breaking that habit. Helpful tips for parents involve the following: refrain from texting a teen when it is known that he or she is driving, establish household rules regarding text messaging while driving, and set an example—do not text and drive (p. 1).

This is the sort of awareness-building and education about text messaging and driving that, when paired with state and federal bans of the act, will have the greatest affect on teenagers who text and drive. With an increase in such actions, the teen trend of text messaging while driving will most likely decrease. Conversely, without an expansion of such measures, the texting-while-driving epidemic will continue to grow, more driving distraction will be prevalent among teens, and more young lives will be unnecessarily lost to the deadly habit of text messaging while driving.

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HFA DIVISION WRITING AWARD

(Research Project for Advanced English Course)

Terri McGunegill

Professor Alisa Clapp-Itnyre

ENG L335

7 September 2011

Psychological Criticism of the Writings of Robert Browning and Thomas Hardy:
Fulfilling Unattainable Desires

The late Victorian era was a time when strides were being made to reach a measure of equality between the genders. Writers such as John Stuart Mills were a voice espousing his belief that men in their unbalanced treatment of women by a society where men were attempting to retain control over them. The author of the book, *The Subjection of Women* believed, “[That] men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments... [and] desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected with them not a slave merely, but a favorite. They [men] have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their mind” (Norton 1063).

I. A. Richards in his book *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) wrote: “Freud suggested that 'artistic gift is a compensatory function of neurosis'. He suggested that ‘art is a vehicle of expressing the unfulfilled desires and repressed instincts of the writer and therefore it [is] a sort of dream-fulfillment, and with this, becomes a substitution for unfulfilled gratification.’ Richards postulates that “there are conflicting instincts and desires, or *appetencies* (italics mine) in the human mind and by expressing these appetencies create a sense of “emotional tranquility” (n.p.). By explicating the writings through psychological criticism, I will argue that, if not in actions then words, Victorian men within the artist community, by including

violent mistreatment of women including murder, rape, and mental mistreatment during a time when the movement toward gender equality was active in Victorian society, unconsciously desired to perpetuate the “subjection of women” in the content of their art forms. By applying this form of literary criticism, I will suggest that Robert Browning in his poems “My Last Duchess” and “Porphyria’s Lover,” and Thomas Hardy’s novel *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* utilized their art form to combat this repression.

Professor Philip V. Allingham believes that Browning’s “My Last Duchess” creates what one critic has termed “psychography,” a text which serves to reveal the inner workings of a single character’s psychology, values, tastes, and motivations” (Victorian Web 2007). As the 19th century continued, the fear of changing from a male dominated society led to fear of becoming socially emasculated. Although Browning’s poem are believed to illustrate the gender struggles of women in this epoch, I will argue he is, to repeat Freud psychological observation, “[...] enshrine[ing] [his] unfulfilled desires and repressed instincts[...] and therefore [...] his poems as “My Last Duchess” and “Porphyria’s Lover” are form of dream-fulfillment” (Allingham). In other words, Robert Browning used these two poems not to alert his readers to gender struggles, but to maintain his sense of masculinity in a time when women were making strides to become equal to men. Although in general terms the artistic community was sympathetic to the struggles women were facing to achieve women’s rights, throughout this paper I will challenge this paradigm and postulate that in some writings of Browning and Hardy unconsciously fought the change.

By applying Freud’s belief that “art is a vehicle of expressing the unfulfilled desires and repressed instincts of the writer”, and when desires are expressed through their writing, it “becomes the gratification of unfulfilled desires”. Looking into Browning’s first poem, “My Last

Duchess,” I would suggest that he uses his character of the Duke to unconsciously experience substitute gratification and maintain his feeling of male superiority. The first inference within “My Last Duchess” reveals the Duke’s gratification of achieving control of his wife when he speaks to Frà Pandolf regarding the painting he created of the Duchess. The Duke, in his belief that she was too pleased with the attention of the painter, seeks to dominate her inclination “too soon [to be] made glad” (22), Keeping the painting behind the curtain “since none puts by / the curtain I have drawn for you, but I” (Browning 10) and takes her imagined power over him deciding who can view it. The Duke (through Browning) refers to his belief that “... twas not / Her husband’s presence only, [that should] call that spot / Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek” (14, 15). Later in the poem the Duke muses: “She looked on, and her looks went everywhere” (24), exposing the Dukes’ paranoia that the Duchess is looking desirously at other men, and even his vexation that she could find pleasure in the simplest experiences as “[...] the daylight of the West / The bough of cherries” (26, 27) I argue the poet is projecting his own fear of not being the lone object of the affection of a woman and obtains “emotional tranquility.” The symbol of the “white mule” in line 28 can be interpreted as a reference to the purity a woman should retain for her “master”. Additionally, the reference to ‘cherries’ and be a reference to the Dukes assertion that she should look to him only for sex. In lines 42 and 43 the Duke, by expression that “[...] I choose / Never to stoop” says that he will not “stoop” to accept his wife’s exuberance and joy, especially if he is not the sole recipient or motivation for “...that spot / Of joy [which appears] into the Duchess cheek” (14, 15). Furthermore, Browning suggests that the Duke’s wife should be more than honored, indeed thrilled at receiving “... [His] gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name” (33). Perhaps this reference to “the gift”, which could represent the privilege of becoming her master, thus obliges the Duchess to live in absolute subjection to him and is the poet’s

fulfillment of his dream fantasy. “Will ‘t please you rise?” (47), employs the mocking litote continuing his abuse, even when dead, thus allowing him to feel superior. By having the Duchess killed or killing her: “I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands / as if alive” (46, 47), he temporarily assuaged his fears by achieving ultimate dominance.

Martin Bidney, in his article “makes reference to David Eggenchwiler’s “Psychological Complexity in ‘Porphyria’s Lover’” (Victorian Poetry, Vol. 8, Spring 1970) in his psychological criticism, “focuses...on standard character psychology: rationalization, projection, [and] compensatory fantasy drama” (672), ‘where the writer transmits his repressed instinct to control the female.’ As I delve into another of Robert Browning’s poems, “Porphyria’s Lover”, I will build upon the argument that he is writing from his unconscious desire to maintain the Victorian convention of male dominance over women. Catherine Maxwell in her article entitled “Browning's Porphyria's Lover argues that:

Browning inflates and explodes romantic egotism: the lover kills the woman, not himself. But the death that preserves the woman's imputed compliance is, Browning implies, but a formalization of the romantic male speaker's desire to fix and possess the female beloved. Romantic poetry idealizes the woman who is subject to the male gaze; she is the reflector and guarantor of male identity. Hence the male anxiety about woman's independence, for her liberty puts masculine self-estimation at risk.

By including such phrases as “soiled gloves” (as Norton observes, an example of the ‘soiled glove’, is a representation the fallen woman’s loss of purity in William Holman Hunts painting *The Awakening Conscience*, and her “smooth white shoulder”, the color white generally accepted

to represent innocence or purity, projects Browning's need to believe the object of his love is pure and is Browning's unconscious desire to keep his idea of the "idealized woman" alive.

During this era, artists were particularly obsessed with the significance and depiction of golden hair, and Browning includes "yellow hair" in both lines 18 and 20. Elisabeth G. Gitter writes: "The hair is not simply the sign of the woman's inner self... Hair becomes, rather, in itself something vital, independent, energetic (941)-check citation ... Thus the golden-haired woman represented in Victorian literature and by Pre-Raphaelite artists becomes a complex but powerful figure [and could represent] the outward sign of her inner blessedness and innocence... [or could be] a weapon, web, or trap; a glittering symbolic fusion of the sexual lust and the lust for power that she embodied..." (943). I would suggest that Browning uses Porphyria's hair in the duel context of innocence and sexuality. As she removed her hat, her "yellow hair" falling, he saw her innocence, yet conversely, saw his inability to be free of the torture of his unfulfilled desire to keep her as a possession. Her hair becomes a representation her inability to, "From pride, and vainer ties dissever, / And give herself to me forever" (Browning 24, 25), and the "sexual lust" she stirred within him, yet her inability to "set her passion free" (23). Thusly, after he looks into her eyes and sees (or believe he sees) that she 'worshiped' him, he wants to keep his 'swelling' heart alive: "That moment [when] she was mine, mine, fair, / Perfectly pure and good" (36, 37); to freeze that look keeping it only for himself. In his dream-fulfillment, his desire or need to maintain male-domination, he uses her "yellow-hair" as the means for attaining her permanent subjection; to preserve that mental snapshot. Her lover gathers her 'yellow hair' "in one long string [and] wound / Three times her little throat around" (39, 40) suffocating her to death. He acknowledges his unconscious appetencies and attains 'emotional tranquility' by

subduing her, whereby satisfying his need to feel superior, and by believing he is entitled to be superior, convinces himself that “No pain felt she; / I am quite sure she felt no pain” (41, 42).

Whether there is evidence that the tide of gender equality was changing, and the appearance of progress was being made by “endless debate[s] in a wave of fiction and magazine articles”, there was still the issue of “how women were regarded, and regarded themselves, as members of a society” (Norton 933). I will argue that it would be presumptuous to believe that the majority of Victorian society – women or men – could accept this movement without fear; the established male-dominance was deeply ingrained. Even though members of the intellectual community: authors such as Mills, and novelists as Elizabeth Gaskell and George Elliot (Marian Evans, although *she* choose to write under a male pseudonym to be seen as a serious author) made strides to create public awareness of gender inequality, there still remained vestiges of the established beliefs. Margaret Hegonnet writes of Thomas Hardy, “...the feminist dimension in Hardy’s novels – manifests in his characterizations and in his plots – makes these works all the more hysterical by provoking in the male narrator acute anxiety and ... the unconventional aspects of the women he constructs threatens his own imaginary sense of masculinity, triggering his fear of castration” (The Sense of Sex 90). As the author of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, he was touted as a sympathetic proponent of gender equality. Yet it has been suggested, ‘wrote stories that would sell to a Victorian readership consisting mostly of women’, and in addition, from the beginning of his literary career studied the literary market and what type of stories would sell. I would also suggest that he was actually insecure and threatened by women who were his intellectual equal. Laura Green in her article “Strange [in] difference of sex”: Thomas Hardy, the Victorian Man of Letters and The Temptations of Androgyny” writes that “The idea of male maturity...as invested in the ability to demonstrate intellectual and sexual superiority to women

who are themselves of a superior class marks not only Hardy's novels but also the progress of his career" (Green 10). His need to maintain his feeling of masculine virility is evidenced by "[his] weakness for pretty women" (Alberge). He was a misogynist who believed that "People go on marrying because they can't resist natural forces" and "possibly buying a month's pleasure with a life's discomfort", and, according to Green, "when Hardy met [his first wife] Florence Henniker in 1893, she had already published three novels; Hardy nevertheless approached her as raw material, offering himself as her literary mentor", and "[his] interest in Florence Henniker's literary career appears an occasion for him to demonstrate his intellectual superiority"(533, 34). In an article by In December 2006, Dr. Stuttaford, a contributing columnist of the *The Times* wrote: "The suggestion is that an unexplained fever that Emma Hardy [Thomas' second wife] had in 1891, about the time that Thomas Hardy was starting to enjoy a largely unaccompanied London life, could have been the result of secondary syphilis rather than flu" (Stuttaford).

This brief biographical profile is intended to show that Thomas Hardy was not as forward thinking as is presented, and that his wonderful character of Tess Durbyfield was more a way to project *his* unconscious desire to maintain superiority over women by subjecting Tess to rape/seduction, male dominance, mental and sexual abuse, and death by hanging. Throughout the novel, Hardy refers to Tess in the context of sex, and lingeringly on her sexuality. He reveals an obsessive fantasy in describing her lips as if his character actually existed. He avowals his feelings in passages as: "The pouted-up deep red mouth" (II 15), and on first meeting Alec d'Urberville, while he feeds her strawberries among her 'protestations', "he insisted; and in a slight distress *she parted her lips and took it* (italics mine)", 'obeying' him "like one in a dream" (V 42). In addition, Angel Clare "had studied the curves of those lips so many times that he could

reproduce them mentally with ease: and now, as they again confronted him, clothed with colour [sic] and life, they sent an aura over his flesh, a breeze through his nerves” (XXIV 151).

Amidst the innocuous text lurks Hardy’s sexual fantasies as he watches “as a voyeur”, as some critics have said, the action. Rape, or even seduction of a woman by a man, as described on page seventy-four of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, is a way for the author to fulfill his unconscious desire for male dominance and dream-fulfillment, and since the narrator/writer (Hardy) is the only observer to her violation (without intervening), he “by using the act of looking as the metaphorical equivalent of all forms of apprehension, Hardy encloses himself in an image that turns the subject of his apprehension into an object—the object his eye can see. By necessity then, Hardy himself is implicated in the very immorality he has watched and deplored” (Freeman 323), and I will argue results in “expressing the unfulfilled desires and repressed instincts of the writer therefore resulting in his dream-fulfillment, and by allowing himself to express his sexual feeling through the narrator, becomes a substitution for unfulfilled gratification” (Richards). Tess’s actions after Alec’s assault in the Chase can also be seen as Hardy’s belief that women should remain in submission to become the sole object of his attention.

The character of Angel Clare and his inability to forgive her for the rape she underwent that resulted in a child, something beyond her control, (even when Hardy re-writes the scene as seduction, either situation can be interpreted as male sexual supremacy) leading to Angel’s rejection becomes a form of mental abuse, or the desire for male dominance: “You were one person; now you are another...the woman I have been loving is not you” (Hardy 228, 29). In addition, the author by finding expression for his repressed wish to keep women ‘below him’ and in ‘servitude’, Tess’ replies to Clare’s rejection: “...I shan’t do anything, unless you *order* me to... [and] I will *obey* you like your wretched slave (italics mine)”... (230). Themes of subjection

and repression continue to the end of the novel when Tess accepts responsibility for whatever outcome has befallen her or the people she loves. In the end at Stonehenge when Tess asks Angel, “Have they come for me? (LX)”, with “yes” she responds in complete acquiescence saying, “It is as it should be...I shall not live for you to despise me!” (396), sacrificing herself up to male superiority.

In conclusion, I suggest that the authors of poems and novel referenced – Robert Browning and Thomas Hardy – although generally sympathetic joining their literary voices to the cause of equality for women, Robert Browning and Thomas Hardy were likewise threatened by a feeling that it would lead to their loss of masculinity. By alternative explication of the text, and by looking into the “[...] the inner workings of a single character’s psychology, values, taste, and motivation, I concluded that the characters portrayed: the Duchess, Porophris and Tess Durbyfield, became the unconscious road to ‘dream-fulfillment’, thereby attaining the ‘emotional tranquility’ they could not realistically achieve.

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Notes:

[Porphero's Lover—purity...]

[Tess—rape, seduction...keep woman under man]

[Question is, do the men show these stories in sympathy for women or in unconscious support...? A case study of D.G.Rossetti of actual man and his treatment of a woman....

Siddal—a possible answer... (not included) .

ADDITIONAL ESSAYS

W130 ESSAY EXAMPLES

Kaylyn Flora

Christie Joy

English W-130

5 November 2009

Living Straight Edge

It's one o'clock in the morning. The music is loud and the speakers are booming. On stage, the drummer sets the pace and you can feel the base drum right in the core of your stomach. The guitars' feed whines in the amplifiers so loudly you can feel a migraine in your temple upon walking into the small room. Kids packed tightly together thrust their boldly marked fists in the air and jump up and down in time with the music. The message is shouted loud and clear into the microphone: *"I'm a person just like you, but I've got better things to do than sit around and smoke dope 'cause I know I can cope. Laugh at the thought eating ludes; laugh at the thought of sniffing glue. Always going to keep in touch, never want to use a crutch—I've got the Straight Edge!"*

Straight Edge is a relatively new term—only about 20-25 years old and is credited to the vocalist of the 1980's punk band Minor Threat, Ian MacKaye. And what is Straight Edge,

you might ask? The idea of Straight Edge is a movement promoting clean living. No one knows exactly what clean living entails because no people's beliefs are alike. But a rather large percentage is either vegan or vegetarian and abstains from wearing or using animal-tested products. There are those who believe in abstinence, in if not abstinence, then at least no casual or promiscuous sex. But if there's one thing all Straight Edge have agreed on, it's that there will be no smoking, no drugs, and no consumption of alcohol.

The Straight Edge community is one of a kind. While it is enough that they have chosen to live their lives drug-free, there is more to the ideology of Straight Edge (sXe). Straight Edge youth all around the world have converted to a Straight Edge lifestyle not only for the idea of clean living but because it promotes self-actualization. By taking away the excuse of unhealthy habits, they have taken one step forward in claiming their own responsibility. As a result, they are much less likely to cave in to peer pressure and will have a greater chance of making wise choices in the future. More than anything, committing to the Straight Edge way and actively fighting for a change helps youths understand that even they can make a change.

What happens, though, when the line between a positive message and negative one becomes blurred? Militant Straight Edge—while a very small minority among the lifestyle—is far from being unheard of. In fact, it is because of militant Straight Edge that our lifestyle as whole has been so significantly publicized, and why? On October 31, 1998, a 15-year-old Bernardo Reprenza was beaten and murdered by a 30-member gang of these “straight edge” punks after a Halloween party. Beaten so horrifically that his friends and family could hardly recognize his body, he was pronounced dead at the

scene. Loved by friends and family alike, we can only wonder who would want to harm such a wonderful boy.

Just who are these militant sXe anyway? While some outspoken youths with very strong opinions about their beliefs may be considered militant, it is because of a misconstrued idea of clean living that there sXe choose to promote their lifestyle by force. Acts of violence against those who smoke, consumed alcohol, or even people whom they didn't particularly care for, like Bernardo, have been victims of Straight Edge violence. Clean living author Ross Haenfler describes in his book *Straight Edge: Clean Living Youth, Hardcore Punk, and Social Change*, a group of militant sXe attending a concert. "I watched as one kid tried to apologize for running into an older, much larger kid on the dance floor. The 'victim' and several of his friends beat down the youth, chasing him out of the room" (Haenfler 81). The then goes on to describe how there were other sXe kids outside wearing t-shirts that read "STRAIGHT EDGE—If you aren't now, you will be" over a picture of a machine gun (Haenfler 81). It is because of cases such as this and Bernardo's that the Straight Edge way of life has been targeted and called into question.

Positive Straight Edge such as myself can only grieve that almost all of our media attention has been captured by fool gang members when we fight for something more universal than what violence may inflict; if there is anything worth fighting for, it is to help our youth against becoming victims of peer pressure. Positive Straight Edge encourages others to find their own feet in the wave that is modern society as it crashes down upon us all. With our tattoos and tees, and with our voices, we fight for a brighter and cleaner future for ourselves and the future of our children. Simply our

commitment to live Straight Edge has kicked modern society's assumption of ignorant, irresponsible teenagers in the shin and together we parade gallantly onward—ever onward.

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It's not a gang. I swear.

Communities

Justin Witham
W130
Christie Joy
October 28th, 2008

Sports fans belong to a community of their own. These people can be the coolest, most laid back people you could ever meet. Then again, they can be some of the drunkest, funniest people you will ever see, urinating on the floor in the restroom so they could get back to see the game faster. Been there, done that. Sports are on all year and every sport produces its own version of fans. I happen to be a hardcore football fanatic. I know stats, players, teams, you name it but I still have my favorite team. Fans can be classified into three specific categories: superfans, rivals, and fair-weather fans. Whether you are a sports fan or not you can appreciate competition of some sort and you will realize that you too fit into one of these categories.

You've seen fans dressed head to toe in their team colors. You've seen them put on ridiculous costumes. These are the superfans. There is no doubt these are the true fans that have always had the same favorite team. Usually from a young age these fans are groomed by their fathers in front of a television on Sunday afternoons. If these die-hard fans are not at the game they are sitting in front of the television, drink in hand still wearing their costume. Referees who make a bad call in front of these fans could end up having a pretty terrible day. These fans are the rowdiest group you will meet. Some of them can be scary at times but they may not be like that when they are not watching the game. Football games can bring out a side of people you would never expect to see. I tend to get pretty excited when I'm watching football and can get put into some really terrible moods. This season has been good because the Titans, my favorite team, are undefeated and on a roll. Call me McDonald's, I'm lovin' it. I will run my mouth to anybody I see wearing colors I don't like. I guess it's kind of like a gang of sorts. I have seen fights started over two opposing teams. It'll start with a very graphic shouting

match and then it turns violent. Usually this isn't the case and everyone goes their separate ways. I would not suggest saying something negative around a large group of these avid fans, though. You may not make it out without bruises or maybe just a damaged ego. However, if you are on the winning side it feels incredible to let it be known.

Rivalries have been around for generations. The Hatfields and McCoys, Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd, even the East and West Coast are all famous rivalries. A rivalry can start at any given time with one event that can change everything. For example, the Indiana Pacers and the Detroit Pistons once had an on-court fight that led to a huge brawl involving fans and players. Since that moment, these two teams have one of the biggest rivalries in the National Basketball Association. Most of the time a certain team's rival is usually a team from the same division or the same state. Indiana and Purdue, for example, have had a long-standing rivalry in college sports. You cannot be a fan of both schools and live in the state of Indiana. Either you love Indiana and hate Purdue or vice versa. There is no absolutely no compromise when it comes to this feud. Although rivalries exist in all aspects of life, sports have without a doubt the greatest ones. Fans demonstrate all types of behavior when it involves their favorite teams and their rivals. These teams compete more than a few times every year so fans become very familiar with the other teams and fans alike.

There are many advantages of being a sports fan in a rivalry. In my case there are few Tennessee Titans fans around this area. The Colts are a hometown team and happen to be the Titan's biggest rival in the AFC South division. The few other true fans and myself have to stick by each other since we are outnumbered about 100 to 1. When

you are having a losing season the other team's fans will gang up on you. This is where you are tested and have to stick by your guns. If you are a true fan there are very few disadvantages of being a member of a fan-based community. A common goal with everyone else in the community keeps fans bonded together for many years. This only remains the same if these are true fans and not fans that will turn their backs as soon as a losing season comes along.

You know what really grinds my gears? The one thing that disgusts me more than anything else in sports: fair-weather fans. Bandwagon jumpers or jerks, it is acceptable to call these types of people every name under the sun. They are the most despicable, disrespectful, arrogant types of human beings alive on earth. If you haven't already guessed, I really hate them. My belief is that you should have one team and stick by them year to year. No matter how bad they suck or how much you can't stand to watch them play, you should always stick by them. People who jump on a bandwagon are always going to be on the winning end, every single season. It is not fair to those who have been around since day one supporting the team they love. Although they are worthless, these people are very helpful to those who make a living in the sports memorabilia business. Millions of dollars are spent on t-shirts, jerseys, bobble head dolls and other items that show off the team color by true fans each year. To go along with this, one winning season means an increase in profits for the team. I think any sports organization would like to thank these dumb people for emptying their pockets.

In my current situation I am seeing these people coming out of the woodwork everywhere. These people wouldn't remember the glory years. I'm positive they

wouldn't remember the starting roster of the 1999 AFC Championship team. I know for a fact they wouldn't know who caught the pass that ended up one yard short of a touchdown in Super Bowl XXXIV. The answer to that would be wide receiver Kevin Dyson. Just the other day I was out and ran across another Titans fan. I happened to be wearing a Titans hoody at the time. I was complimented on my team selection and then asked if I was a real fan. I was kind of offended by this and proceeded to question this person's fan hood. In the end we both agreed that we were both true fans with good morals, pounded it and walked away. If you are reading this and you realize that you are not a "real" fan, I suggest that you walk into the bathroom and stop breathing.

Being involved in a community of sports fans has its ups and downs. No matter how bad the team is doing you will always have a common interest with everyone else in the community. These people will always have your back in an argument with a rival team and will always stick up for you when the times are tough. You can spend time with your comrades, have cookouts, get together to watch the games, and hopefully at the end of the season a party to cheer your team to a championship. Any person can be a fan. Fans don't discriminate. As long as you are wearing the same color they will get along with you no matter what. It isn't a gang -- it's a brotherhood. In some ways you can almost call these people family. Sports can bring a group of people closer together than almost any other activity. This may not stand true for all people but if you were to ask someone who has competed in organized sports they will agree. Sports bring out the best and worst in people. Emotions run wild when you are in the heat of the moment. You don't have to be a sports fan to appreciate the love of the game. Basketball, football, volleyball, tennis, soccer, and baseball alike have all types of fans.

I respect the superfans. I have rivals. I wish nothing but bad things upon fair-weather fans.

In A Place Called Ra

Dwight Madden

English W130

Mary Fell

March 8, 2007

Intellectual Property of

Dwight Madden

March 8, 2007

In a Place Called Ra

About one half mile north of Springwood Lake is a campsite that my brothers, friends and I named Ra. It was a place where a restless young man could get away from the noise of the world. The campsite is located near a bend in the river, and was created by spring floods that eroded the soil, and left in the river's wake a sand bar that serves as a landmark and points a traveler to the camp. The sand bar narrows the river into a deep channel that is bridged by a felled cottonwood tree covered with moss, and that is where I had to cross to get to the camp site. In 1970, the Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl built a boat from papyrus and crossed the Atlantic from Bolivia to Morocco. This boat was named after the Egyptian sun god Ra. Heyerdahl's successful Atlantic crossing challenged me to experience nature and motivated me to be adventurous.

In the early spring when the plants started to grow again, and March came in like a lamb, I would go to camp Ra for an overnight stay, usually on the weekends. I remembered seeing patches of early spring snow scattered on the ground and the river's applause lured me to gaze upon the creamy mocha current. The union of warm spring air and the cold ground created a fog that lumbered across the dormant foliage as though it had nowhere to go and all day to get there. On the ground I would find acorns or wild berries clinging to the vine that had been missed by foraging deer or squirrels in preparation for the winter. I noticed a couple of fallen trees and their limbs scattered on the ground. I suspected they had succumbed to the laws of nature and lost the struggle to claim a place among their stronger elders. When I arrived at the campsite, I sat down before I started a fire, and I would close my eyes and listen to the lone sound of the river and take a deep breath of cool spring air, realizing that it would

soon be filled with the sounds of wildlife and the scent of wildflowers after a long and arduous winter.

April roared like a Lion, and the windswept woodlands of Ra gave way to the yawning and stretching of its wildlife and their newborn. The plant life was young and weak, but day by day their roots became stronger in anticipation of their ascent towards the sun. The river had ceased pushing its boundaries, and was transformed by the filtering blue clay of Indiana into calm, clear and springlike water. April's showers did indeed bring May flowers such as the hawthorn's white and pink fragrant flowers and small red fruits. Considered the prime month of the four seasons, May with its low humid days and mild windy nights is what I call, "springs preview of fall." The winds of May are sacred to me because of their sovereign power and controlling influence. Just listen to the trees at night as they sway in obeisance and gaze upon the stars. That night I slept a deep sleep, and a restful sleep, in a place called Ra.

In the summer the fern competed with thistle, ivy and field grass to assert its dominance on the land, but nature struck a balance and they compromised. The new foliage was a safe haven from predators and a source of sustenance for insects. June's lightning bugs heralded the advent of summer and blackberry winter. The woodlands now teamed with wildlife, such as a squirrel leaving the nest having checked on her young or the temperamental blue jay that tried to wrest the night crawler from the robin, and the eight point deer rutting its horns on a young maple or the raccoon near the river's edge that hides his carnivorous habits behind a playful mask. To the west, the land sloped upward to a field covered with wild rye grass, sunflowers, and daisies.

However, what invited me to ascend the hill was not nature's palette but the sensual reward of wild strawberries and raspberries just beyond my view. When I sat on the river's edge I enjoyed the hypnotic effect of the rock bass swimming and the water reflecting the sunlight like Waterford crystal. On overcast days I would go to the woodlands to listen to the bob-white, and per chance see his beautiful red plumage, or hear the whip-poor-will who sings his own name. But it was on the forecasted rainy days that I went to see the cardinal who warned of impending rain; jumping from branch to branch, ascending to the top of a birch tree, and facing the direction the rain comes, he sings, "it rains here, it rains here, wet, wet, wet."

As the fall season moved upon the land I would go to Ra to ponder and meditate. I was amazed at the many vibrant colors that fall has to offer, such as brazen red, orange and sunburst yellow. The fall landscape became a coat of many colors. To listen to and feel the leaves crunch under my feet, and to watch the 'whirly gigs' fall from their mother maple in hopes that from something small would come great things. The red yellow blaze of an early evening camp fire, the crackling pine knots and the smell the bacon frying in the pan, invited a warm cup of coffee and a smoke. I journeyed up the slope to the edge of the field near the berry patch to get a glimpse of the setting sun. Sol had cast his red hue upon the clouds and I remembered the sailors' mantra, "red sky night, sailors delight." I wondered if Heyerdahl had looked upon a similar sunset on his journey across the Atlantic. As I turned to go back to the campsite, I saw a red-tailed hawk perched upon a thorny locust tree. Since the red-tailed hawk is the symbol for Ra, and is indigenous to that area, confirmed that we had named the campsite and the surrounding woodlands correct. Acting on the inspiration of an adventurer helped me to

appreciate and respect nature. I had realized that nature was not as finite as I thought, and that there are many places under the canopy of heaven that awaits a restless young man to explore, mature and learn wisdom

Carrie Ingalls

Professor Fell

Final Draft

W130

Poor But Inspired

What defines being poor? Is being poor having no money? Does it constitute not having material possessions or could it refer to lack of love, or lack of family and friends, possibly even lack of spiritual faith? I believe that being poor has lots of different meanings. I believe that being poor causes great hardships and it can also inspire you to greatness.

I was born in 1975, the oldest of four children. My dad was an automobile mechanic for Fred First Ford, where he worked on commission, and took any side jobs that neighbors or family members asked him to do. My mom was a housewife. I grew up in the 1980's, during the recession, and a lot of people were poor then. Since we lived on my father's income, and any side jobs he did to make ends meet, money was always tight through those years.

To this day, I am taken right back to my childhood every time I eat ham or have to debone a chicken; those smells are imbedded in my brain. We were always getting help with food and clothes from our church and other churches in our community. We ate a lot of ham. They would always bring us a whole ham and my mom would slice, dice and cube it, then freeze the extras. We ate ham loaf, hot ham and cheese sandwiches, ham and macaroni & cheese

casserole, ham and beans, scalloped ham and potatoes. You name it; if it had ham in it we ate it. The same with chicken; my mom would boil a chicken and I would have to help to debone it to make chicken and noodles, chicken and dumplings, or even chicken pot pie, and many other dishes that would use up the extra pieces of meat. I can still to this day remember that smell of a chicken boiling and feel the texture of that rubbery chicken. Yuck! This was a cheap way to make a meal and would ensure that we would have plenty of leftovers.

I can remember my mom getting all four of us children cleaned up and walking to the Town Trustee's office. She would pick up free cheese, peanut butter, and eggs, which the government issued to those in need. That government cheese made the best grilled cheese sandwiches. We hardly ever ate out at a restaurant. I can count on one hand the number of times that we did. I had never eaten in a Taco Bell or Burger King until I was seventeen and was working in Richmond.

Very rarely were there any treats, such as candy, Doritos or Coke. My mom would sometimes splurge on a three liter of Nehi or RC cola and a deli pizza on Friday nights. This only happened if my dad had worked an extra side job. We would all get to bring our sleeping bags downstairs and watch "The Dukes of Hazzard" and eat pizza. I cannot believe how happy those memories are for me. I thought that we had struck it rich; it was such a big deal.

One of my favorite memories is going to my Grandma Ruble's, and she would always have a full container of cookies. She would also have cartons of sixteen-ounce glass bottles of Coke. We were allowed to split one bottle between

my brothers and me. She had those neat aluminum glasses that would feel so cold in your hands. That was heaven. We were so excited; I can remember that the Coke would always fizz and tickle our noses.

My first realization that we were poor was when I was in Kindergarten, and everyone had to memorize their home phone number. I can remember the other kids asking why I did not have a phone number and the teacher saying that my parents could not afford one. I was so embarrassed. I was five, and no one wants to be the odd one out, even at five. We also did not have a color TV or a microwave. When school would start every year, we did not go school shopping like all the other kids. I can remember my best friend asking me one year why I did not wear any of my new outfits. I hated that I was so different than my friends. I did not have my first pair of Reeboks until I was eighteen years old, and I bought them myself.

Christmases were hard. The local churches would stop by and bring that unforgettable ham and gifts. I remember one of the hardest Christmases when all we had were an orange, a pair of gloves, and a toboggan, a large candy cane in our stockings, and a few small gifts under the tree. I went back to school that year and all my friends got the new "IT" toy...Nintendo. They were all talking about it and how fun the games were. Then they asked me how did I like mine, and I lied and said it was really neat, even though I did not get one.

My family never owned a new or even semi-new car. My junior year in high school (1992), my dad would pick me up in a 1974 LTD Station Wagon, which was faded green with red primer. Everyone called it the Christmas wagon.

I would always make sure that I was right out front. That way my dad did not have to circle around. I hated it because all my friends would be out there with me and see the car. I can remember the first and only time my best friend rode home with me. She made sure that her mom brought her from then on, so that she did not have to be seen getting in my dad's car. I remember that I understood, but it still hurt. I am ashamed when I think back today, how I acted so embarrassed and would duck down and hide.

Despite...Looking back on it now, I would not have wanted to have been raised any other way. The hard times made me appreciate the good times so much more. I did not take the little things for granted. These events made me decide that I was going to have much more out of my life, and, if I had kids, they were not going to have to worry about money like I did.

Therefore, I got my first job at fifteen; I was a cashier at the local grocery. I walked to work every day after school and walked home every night when they closed. I learned to be independent and what the meaning of a dollar was. I learned to respect the energy my dad put towards keeping us a float.

I learned that life was what I made out of it. If I worked hard, I could accomplish anything. I am not going to say that there were not times that I resented the fact that I had to work so hard while my friends got to play sports or have fun hanging out at the mall. I resented it then, but I also knew that I had to pay my car insurance and have gas money to get to work. So I pushed myself to do these things and accomplish the things I strived for. My senior year, I went to school half day and worked forty hours every week at MCL Cafeteria. I

wanted to do my share to help, to make things easier for my parents.

I believe that I had one of the best childhoods anyone could ask for. There were many good memories that I carry with me today. My brothers and I would get up in the morning and go outside. We only came back for lunch, and before my dad got home from work. We played baseball in the street or sometimes we would use the basketball court and see if we could hit it over the firehouse. That was an automatic homerun! We really liked to play there, but we only could use the court if there were not any big kids using it. When this version of the game would get old, we changed the structure using wiffle balls and tennis balls. We used the same concept, just different balls and bats. We got our neighborhood friends to form one team called the "City Boys," and then our friends that did not live in town made a team called the "Country Boys." We played at the big ball diamond that was used in real games, and I can remember that all the moms came and took pictures. What made it really special was that someone called the *Palladium Item* and they came and took pictures and did a write up about it. We all got our pictures in the paper, and I still have the newspaper clippings. It was a very good memory, which I have kept with me over the years. We road bikes everywhere and built forts and clubhouses, I never heard anyone say "I am bored." We used our imaginations.

Since I have grown up and started my own family, I have learned a lot of things that I thought were so important do not matter at all, that as long as you have your health and your family and a few good friends, you are indeed rich in life.

I grew up poor, and we had very few material possessions. What we had was an abundance of love, laughter, and friends. In my search for the fame and riches that I was determined I would have, I think that I had the better end of the stick. I would not trade all the friends and memories that I made growing up for all the money or new clothes or McDonald's Big Macs which I have acquired in the years since. I may have grown up poor, but it made me rich in all the ways that matter or count in this world. Being poor as a child did not stop me from being rich as an adult.

W131 and H140 ESSAY EXAMPLES

Deidra Kay Purvis

Dr. Clapp-Itnyre

H140

October 2009

Forest Destruction and the Effects on Humankind

Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* is about someone called the Once'ler who finds a lovely forest of make believe trees. One by one he makes use of these trees making what he calls "Thneeds" that apparently everyone needs. While cutting down trees and the making of Thneeds, he destroys the habitat of all the animals that once lived there. Once all the animals are gone, the last tree is cut down. With no trees left, there is nothing left to profit from or live off of. Everyone leaves and the Once'ler is left alone with nothing. This is a great story of what is actually happening to us all around the world. We're destroying forests, but once we use them all, where are we going to go? The animals of the forest are directly effected by deforestation, but the effects will come around to humans as well. We complain about national forests being ours so we should be allowed to use them, but what we need to understand is that once we use them, they're gone. If everyone in America received a share of a national forest, then we all decided to make use of our land by cutting down the trees either for the land to build

something or to profit from the trees themselves, then we will be left with zero forest.

Now where we will go for resources? There will be nowhere to go once it's all gone. Not only that, but forests are very important for upholding the ecosystem that we all need to survive. A great example of how deforestation can affect the ecosystem is taking place in Kenya right now. The destruction of our forests is just the beginning of all the destruction that we're doing to this planet, and it is getting out of hand. It is important to know why we are destroying our forests, what effects deforestation will have on our future, and what we can do to solve this problem.

We are destroying forests simply to benefit human kind, or in some sad cases merely for personal benefit. Sometimes, trees are in the way. They're in the way of shopping centers, highways, communities, farmland, theme parks, parking lots, ranching, and anything else that the human can possibly desire. There are also uses of the trees – paper, lumber, packaging, and the list goes on and on. Just take a look around you. From where I'm sitting right now I see books, shelves, tissues, boxes, walls, chairs, tables, junk mail, notebooks, pamphlets, magazines, and decorations, all at the cost of thousands and thousands of trees. The Mau Forest in Kenya is a great example of forest destruction. According to *VOA News* these trees from Kenya's largest area to catch water are being sacrificed for settlers, loggers, and farmers (paragraph 3, 4). They are slowly pushing the boundaries of the forest back, making the forest smaller and smaller. *According to VOA News*, a quarter of the forest has already been destroyed (paragraph 6).

The destruction of our forests comes at a great cost. The more forests are destroyed, the less forests that are left. Eventually, all of the forests will be destroyed!

Then there will be nowhere left to go. Also, there will be no more trees to use as resources; we will be forced look elsewhere for something new to literally exploit to death. The destruction of the Mau Forest is certainly coming at a cost. This forest is the greatest water source for Kenya. According to *VOA News* the Mau Forest feeds twelve rivers, one of those being the very important Mara River (paragraph 3). This river is a big tourist attraction for Kenya and also supports one of the seven natural wonders of the world, the mass migration of animals (paragraph 3). The Mara River, however, is depleting. Each year, the wildebeest migrate across the river. According to *60 Minutes* the wildebeest used to swim across the river, but now they can simply wade across it. If the river is depleted to nothing, the mass migration of animals will become no more. This river is the main source of water, and water is needed for survival. It all leads back to the destruction of the Mau Forest because the forest supplies water to the Mara River along with eleven other rivers. The entire ecosystem of Kenya relies on this forest to catch water. Its destruction is the direct cause of the current drought in Kenya. No doubt, this will effect the local people's ability to even find water to live off of. According to *VOA News*, an estimated 5.5 million people depend on the Mau Forest as their water source (paragraph 21). The economy of the country also relies on the forest because the absence of the Mara River means the absence of a major tourist attraction. It's not all about the animals; people need to understand that the well being of humanity as well depends on forest preservation. This is just one example, but issues like this are popping up worldwide. Every day, the situation worsens. Our planet is not magically growing in size to support human destruction. There are no magical forests waiting for us to use once we destroy all of the forests that we currently have. Once they're gone,

they are gone.

However, there are solutions for forest destruction. This involves sacrifice, and the sacrifice is not cheap, but it is necessary. According to *VOA News*, the Kenya government is finally stepping up and recognizing the problem (paragraph 5). It's a little late in Kenya, but better late than never. It's a little late for our entire planet to be honest, but to quote Wallace Stegner, "Still, they are only wounds; they aren't absolutely mortal. Better a wounded wilderness than none at all" (445). The government in Kenya is actively kicking these settlements out of the Mau Forest. According to *60 Minutes* the government has resorted to going into communities and burning homes down. It doesn't seem fair, but the loggers in the forest are actually there illegally. The settlers there have deeds for their land, but they did not pay for the land. It was given to them by a past government that didn't foresee the effects of their actions. There are other places to settle, so why must they destroy a forest? Leaving this delicate forest will also benefit their own wellbeing. If they were allowed to get to a point where there is no more forest, their lifestyles will be greatly effected by droughts and a poor economy.

As for the rest of the world, we need to hit the pause button. Let's just take a look at the planet that we have left, and figure out what we can do to benefit the planet and in turn benefit human life and ultimately human survival. What we need is a comprehensive plan for Earth. This is realistically out of reach. The countries in the world have a hard enough time trying to manage to not bomb each other, so there is nearly no chance that they will actually work together to form a plan for our planet to allow us to sustain life on it. Let's start small. Even a comprehensive plan for the United States would be a start. We need to look at what forest we have left, and deem that

forest area. We can't afford to lose anymore because we can't even start to predict the horrible consequences to our environment leaving horrible consequences on humankind. There is no need for the growth of cities into forest land; instead, we need to rebuild the cities that have already destroyed our land and use those for housing. The bottom line is that we stop the destruction of our Earth and begin working with what we have. This involves much reuse of destroyed land and depleted resources. This seems unlikely to happen, but if we don't take action, Earth will be destroyed. This also can't be a one man or a one nation thing; the entire planet needs to get involved.

In the song "Big Yellow Taxi" Joni Mitchell sings, "They took all the trees/ put 'em in a tree museum/ and they charged the people/ a dollar and a half just to see 'em/ don't it always seem to go/ that you don't know what you've got/ till it's gone/ they paved paradise/ and put up a parking lot." This song brings tears to my eyes because it is coming more and more true. What are we going to do a few years from now when there are no trees left? We might have to go to a tree museum just to see what once was. In reality, by the time we deplete our forests to that extent, we'll have a lot worse things to deal with than museums. We'll be dealing with problems like how to survive without basic resources. Forest destruction is the destruction of humankind. We need to get together to solve this before it's too late, if it's not already too late. As humans, we feel that we have the right to overuse resources and destroy forest, and nothing bad will come of it. Whether you care about nature or not, we need nature to survive. We can't feed off of pavement. Humans are not super animals; just like the animals that we are killing off, we need a sustainable ecosystem to live off of. We need healthy food grown from earth. We need clean drinking water that we won't have if every forest that

supports water supplies is destroyed. We have needs for the forests that we are destroying that does not involve cutting them down. With each tree we cut down, we're cutting down another shred of hope for our own future of human survival. We're cutting down forests for our benefits, and now realizing the painful effects this has on us. Joni Mitchell's words will soon be echoing in everyone's ears, "Don't it always seem to go/ that you don't know what you've got/ till it's gone." We'll look around and the last forest will be nothing but pavement, buildings, factories, and waste unless we stop this destruction and do something about it.

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9 March 2009

Seducing the Citizen: The Burst on Energy Pill Advertisements

Did you know that the average American consumer is exposed to an estimated three thousand advertising messages a day? In the article “The Average American is Exposed To...,” Lonny Kocina stated that a single American spends over three years of his or her life viewing advertisements. In this day and age, mass media is all over. It shapes, forms, and influences the buying decisions of the majority through its never ending advertising. Through these advertisements bombarding our daily lives, they create discriminating stereotypes and it seems that there is no stopping it. The effect of advertisements in the present time is both extraordinary and dreadful. On a positive note, advertisements use catchy slogans and phrases to persuade customers. On the other hand, they also incorporate labeling and preconceived notions to which we all have adapted. A recent magazine advertisement for Peptime Energy is a good example of how advertisers will use attractive women to get the attention of readers. The half page ad displays a fragment of a woman’s body, such as her hip, in which the Peptime Energy Pills are being advertised. This ad uses captivating strategies involving words, is discriminating towards women with its images, and is composed with traditional elements that are discriminating to women.

Advertisers commonly use words to expressively communicate the meaning in the advertisement. The words in the advertisement for Peptime Energy Pills instill a concept into the individual's minds that, "Peptime tablets are the hip way to save money on energy." These words are positioned in the ad on a woman's abdomen. This allows viewers' eyes to scroll down the body to the product. "Why pay more than three dollars for an energy shot, when one little pill has the same energy for as little as four cents?" This is typed at the bottom of the page in fine print right under the photograph of a woman. These words are convincing to consumers because they are comparing their prices to leading competitors and stating that their prices are indeed, the lowest. "Peptime mini-white products not only save you money, they deliver the fast acting, long lasting, powerful energy that you're looking for." As the advertisers continue to proudly talk about the positive characteristics, they fail to mention the dangers of the energy pills. According to Cindy Brotherston, an ISSA certified personal trainer, energy pills are not for everyone; they contain many stimulants or energy enhancing ingredients that speed up your heart rate and the production of one's adrenalin. For example, having high blood pressure is already dangerous; taking anything that would increase this medical condition, such as energy pills, could cause damaging problems. If the words in this advertisement were not enough, they continue to persuade people's views with their significant images.

An image may be more influential than a substantial amount of text. The cliché, "a picture is worth a thousand words", refers to the idea that stories can be described with just a single image. Correlating with this expression, the advertiser must activate the right audience using scheming tactics. A skinny, Caucasian woman stands with only

white-boy-cut underwear on and her hand at her hip. The product being advertised is placed in the underwear near her right hip. Exactly whom the main audience is, is slightly unclear. Many women may want to look and feel like the model in the ad; however, this also is eye-catching to men considering there is an enlarged photo of a fit young woman's body. In addition to the illustration, the product itself and the brand name is featured throughout the advertisement over three times. The Peptime Tablets are located in the undergarment of the women and at the right and left hand corners of the advertisement. The advertising agency is increasing the chances of viewers recognizing the product and making it distinguishable.

This advertisement is composed with traditional elements that are disconcerting and objective to women. As it is marketed towards men and women, it is equipped to attract the attention of individuals in a unique way. For instance, in the words of the advertisement, "Peptime Tablets, the hip way to save money on energy", is using a double entendre, whereas the meaning for "hip" can be intended to imply that it is the current thing to be doing, or it is also implied literally as the hip bone, of the human anatomy. The advertisement takes advantage of this, and showcases a woman's figure. As the woman's physique is displayed, it is apparent that she is physically fit, slender, and Caucasian. Many believe that being young, thin, white, beautiful, groomed and polished is the only means of being acceptable. In the advertisement the skinny, Caucasian woman is seen as a mannequin to demonstrate and display the merchandise. According to Jean Kilbourne, the author of Killing us Softly 3: Advertising's Images of Women, in general public women are seen as objects and things rather than human beings. Women's bodies continue to be fragmented in

advertisements; one part of the body is used to sell. Along with Jean Kilbourne, many individuals find this to be the most dehumanizing action. Rather than degrading women's physical qualities, this ad should show pride and honor the physique of a woman.

In today's modern society, advertisements are everywhere and are impossible to avoid. Advertising has become such an ordinary everyday part of society that many people fail to realize the enormous amount of impacts on all aspects of society. Mark Miller, the author of "Getting Dirty," states that clever advertising hypnotizes individuals, and opens the eye to the characters that men and women portray (par.19). Like countless advertisements out there Peptime Energy is one of the many that uses appealing approaches involving words, degrades women with images, and has elements that discriminate women. So, as these Peptime tablets help restore alertness, give you energy, and continue to change the way you feel. Let us make a change, stop the seduction of citizens and diminish the manipulation that advertisements conduct.

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Theology in Policy:
Critique of "A Prophetic Politics"

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Theology in Policy:
Critique on “A Prophetic Politics”

In the article “A Prophetic Politics” in *Inequality Matters* (2005), Jim Wallis expresses his dissatisfaction with “Christian” politicians, and points out the hypocrisy of current American “Christian” political policy. As a Christian, however, I found some ideas in this article to be portrayed un-Biblically, with a striking lack of source citation in a few spots. While I agree with some of his main ideas, his seemingly hateful attitude towards the politics (and politicians) he is criticizing and the absence of practical application of a better policy make for a very disappointing article.

Which Parts Were Well Done?

Wallis’ main thought was excellent. I completely agree with his claim that today’s “Christian” politics threaten the true meaning of the Christian faith (p. 260). Wallis (2005) commented, “the version of Christianity offered in so much of American politics ... threatens both our politics and our faith” (p. 260). It is very true that “Christian” politicians are not acting (in many areas, not just political policy) the way that the Bible commands Christians to act. Many politicians who claim to be Christians (I cannot say that they are not – let God be the judge) do

not seem to incorporate their faith into their political actions. As Wallis accurately pointed out, they focus on the few hot spots of moral and religious problems in America and seemingly ignore the other issues (p. 259). Politicians focus on things like homosexual rights and abortion, and that is where the “Christian” politics often stop. Allow me to clarify: I am not saying that it is bad to focus on issues such as abortion and homosexual rights. Those problems and tensions are present in our society and cannot be ignored, but we must adjust our focus to include issues other than the above stated.

In contradiction to Wallis’ implication, however, poverty and economic inequality - just as abortion and homosexual rights - cannot be the sole focus of American politicians. In the words of Jesus, “Woe to you ...hypocrites! For you pay the tithe...and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone” (Matthew 23:23, NKJV). This concept is illustrated in a book named *In His Steps* by Charles M. Sheldon. *In His Steps* is a fictional story based on the Biblical principle that Jesus set forth in this passage and several others throughout the Gospels: the idea that to truly walk the walk, one must treat each decision from the viewpoint “what would Jesus do?”. The pastor of the church in this story, Henry Maxwell, challenged himself and his congregation to pledge for one year to make each daily decision (everything from clothing choices to financial and business decisions) only after serious prayer, and in strict accordance with the Bible. Through this pledge, the congregation found that they

could not obey the Bible in some areas and ignore it in others. If they found some passage in the Bible that spoke directly against some business venture they were considering, they were forced to ultimately obey the part of the Bible just as they would the commandment “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13, NKJV). We may think this a bit extreme, but Henry Maxwell’s congregation produced some astounding changes to the local government and community through the application of this pledge. From this story we can see that to truly be “Christ-like” (the very definition of the word “Christian”), Christians cannot respond to some parts of the Bible and ignore others. Throughout the nation Christians must act together against anything that threatens their faith; however, there must be a priority placed on the amount of time devoted to actions against different issues.

Wallis showed through this article that he will stand up for what he believes to be right. While I may not agree with everything that he said, I must still admire him for the stand he was willing to make; being willing to defend one’s faith in the midst of criticism takes guts. Wallis (2005) stated, “as an evangelical, I have to be attentive to what the Bible actually says” (p. 261). There are too many Christians today who will claim to be followers of Christ, but are hesitant to stand up in Christ’s defense. It really takes a passion and zeal like Wallis’ to stay true to what you believe even when it’s not a popular position.

How Could Wallis Have Done Better?

Wallis' carelessness in citing evidence and his lack of suggestions towards reformation make the reader question if he really knows his stuff. Yes, Wallis had his opinions. Most of them were even eloquently and concisely stated. All of them mean nothing, however, if they are not backed up by facts and truth. He had his ideas of reform, but did not state how he planned to incorporate those ideas into actual policy. The ideal theology-based politics that Wallis introduced was just that – an idea. His basic weakness was in the lack of practical application accompanying that idea.

Wallis made good use of evidence, but sometimes got so wrapped up in arguing his point that he forgot to inform us of his sources. For example on Wallis discussed statistics regarding poverty and inequality, even referring to a newspaper article (p. 259). He forgot, however, to cite his sources. When he quoted Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount", he failed to mention where an interested reader could find those particular words in the Bible (p. 259). I found the same to be the problem where he quoted the prophet Amos (p. 259). In case you're interested, those passages are found in Matthew 5:9 and Amos 5:24, respectively. For all the reader might know, he could have been quoting his co-worker, or his son's 7th grade friend.

Wallis also failed to mention specific ways to incorporate better policy. Wallis (2005) stated, "Linking personal ethics and social justice...can be...the way to repent of the sins of social and economic injustice" (p. 266). Reading this comment, I wonder how we are to "link personal ethics and social justice." Is he suggesting legislation, or is he advocating a simple change in how we deal with people throughout our community on an individual basis? Toward the end of the article, we find Wallis (2005) asking the question "What would a prophetic politics be like in practice?" (p. 266). Wallis then answered the question by telling a story in which he challenged a Republican strategist's account of campaign strategy by introducing the idea of an opposing candidate who represented Wallis' idea of a true, Biblical Christian politician. In comparing and contrasting the Republican strategist's strategy with his own ideal political platform, Wallis came closer to specific reform tactics than anywhere else in the article. Wallis was very successful in setting forth an idea that better political policy could exist. He was not so proficient at introducing specific ways to change this policy apart from being critical of those who are not making any progress towards this goal.

In Wallis' haste to point out the lack of focus by politicians on poverty and social inequality, he reveals his own defective focus. Wallis seems to imply that the way to reform political policy is to somehow get politicians to stop focusing on abortion and homosexual rights and focus instead on poverty and inequality. This strictly political action, however, would be overlooking the Biblical statement of faith. The Biblical focus is not to simply reform political policy, but to also reform

politicians. You cannot have one kind of reform without the other. Reforming politicians would be a much better (and long-term) way of reforming political policy than by simply criticizing them. Let me clarify what I mean by “reforming politicians.” I mean that in order to positively affect permanent change in political policy, Christians (whether they be politicians or not) must introduce, live out, and teach the Biblical ideas of justice, mercy, and truth.

All of these things I could have overlooked, if it were not for the judgmental spirit in which Wallis’ ideas are portrayed to the reader. I am not justifying or condoning our leaders’ “Christian” political policy, but I cannot say for sure that I would not take the same actions if I were placed in their positions. In the very same Holy Bible that Wallis quoted to criticize our leaders, Jesus provides a cautionary statement for us: “Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:5, NKJV).

I cannot say that this article was successful in convincing me to criticize our leaders. People can look at them and point out all their flaws, but God has placed them in authority over me I should respect and admire them for the responsibility that they are willing to shoulder. I will state here that there is a point at which criticism and action against questionable political decisions is justified Biblically, for example, when people in general are being harmed or their rights being withheld (Hitler, slavery, etc.). However, providing that the political actions of our country’s leaders are not in direct

conflict of God's Word, I must be careful of passing overly harsh judgment. I can pray that they will see and correct whatever faults that are present in their lives and actions, but until I am willing to bet my eternity that I could do a better job than they are currently doing, I must be careful that I do not have a bitter and angry critical spirit.

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Destiny or Determination:
What Decides Your Social Class?

Franklin Hancock

English 131

Monica Hardwick

October 7, 2007

As humans, we like to believe that we are an advanced, intelligent, and highly evolved superior species on this Earth, each capable of independent thought and a sense of self worth. We like to believe that we can control our own futures and we can be anything that we want to be, go anywhere we want to go, and accomplish anything if we try hard enough. But is this true? In a time where money makes the rules, and power begets power, is it possible to join the ranks of the elite and upper class, or even escape poverty and the status of lower class, through determination and hard work, as opposed to exceptional circumstances such as winning the lottery? While some people accept the preconceived notion of belonging to an inherited social class, others believe that individuals are, indeed, capable of moving from one social class to another, either by advancing or regressing. So, are we products of our environment, or are we just not willing to put forth the effort required to change our “predetermined future?”

There are examples everywhere that support the idea that we are products of our environment. Just look around and you can find farming families that stretch over five generations or more. Working class families, from generation to generation, may follow a similar path; where the man goes directly into the work force immediately after graduating high school and starts a family. You will also find college educated professionals whose parents are college educated, and whose children also pursued the same career path. Unfortunately, you will also find several instances where individuals come from broken homes, then, later in life, they continue the cycle by creating a broken home due to drugs, alcohol, or physical abuse. All these examples reinforce the idea of learning by example. You tend to copy what you observe. But we

all have the ability to take our personal observations and use them to help us decide if we are going to allow those events to define us as a person, or utilize them to make us a stronger more determined individual who sees only opportunities instead of roadblocks.

I grew up in a large family with less-than-average opportunities. There were seven children total, five boys and two girls (Dale, Natalie, Donnie Joe, Stephen, myself, Jonathan, and Donna Lee), with about fourteen years difference between my oldest brother, Dale, and my youngest sister, Donna Lee. My father worked at a factory, eventually becoming plant superintendent, and my mother was a homemaker, which was a twenty-four hour a day job just keeping up with laundry, dishes, cleaning, and preparing meals. Everyone wore hand-me-downs and homemade clothes, everyone shared toys, and none of us thought this was unusual. When I started first grade, I faced a case of culture shock. I met kids whose parents were divorced, kids that were an only child, kids that had only one parent, and kids that had the same mom or dad but not both. None of them came from a wealthy family. The area I grew up in had very few people you could classify as rich, with middle to lower income families being more the rule than the exception. But none of the kids I went to school with were as poor as I was at the time.

Yes, I admit it. We were poor. Looking back, I know now that we were living at what most would call poverty level. I vividly recall waiting for my turn to go grocery shopping with my mom at the first of the month because we were on food stamps. I recall getting toys for Christmas that were used, and maybe missing a piece, that someone from the church gave to my parents to help them out. But in all honesty, I also

remember not thinking that we were poor or that anything was ever wrong with our lifestyle. It was what we had accepted as the standard. My parents taught me a lesson reiterated by Dirk Johnson's (2004) article, "White Standard for Poverty," which discusses the lifestyles of many Native Americans, and where he cites David Lester, of the Council of Energy Resource Tribes, "There are worse things than being poor," and "... money is just not the measure of success," (446). They taught me that if you have a loving family, you have more than enough to get you through. Later in life, I discovered that the lifestyle that I was used to was one that received pity, sympathy, and even ridicule. By the time I was in high school, I had decided that I was going to do what I could to make sure that I escaped the upper-lower and lower-middle class. However, fate had a way of interfering with my life. When I received my driver's license, my parents told me that I had to pay for my own vehicle and insurance. So I worked as a bag boy at a local grocery store to pay for everything. My grades started to suffer, but I couldn't quit working. I had to pay for anything I wanted to do, whether it was going on a date, going to McDonald's, or even needing clothes or shoes for school because I was busting out the seams on my pants and my shoes no longer fit me.

When I graduated from high school, instead of going to college, which I wanted to do but couldn't since my grades weren't good enough for a scholarship and my parents couldn't help me out, I got engaged to my high school sweetheart and got a factory job as a machinist. When my fiancé and I started looking for a house, I received some awkward looks from lenders. They said I seemed a little young to be considering marriage and homeownership. I told them that it was not their concern and to let us know when the closing date would be on our house. Like Leonce Gaiter (2004), author

of, “The Revolt of the Black Bourgeoisie,” who was stereotyped by a white classmate that said “Oh, your not really a black person,” because he used proper grammar when speaking (p. 427). That classmate thought of African-Americans as uneducated and improper. I, too, was stereotyped, but as a young, irresponsible boy that couldn’t take on the responsibilities of homeownership. By December of the same year that I graduated high school, my fiancé and I were, indeed, homeowners.

Ever since my high school graduation day, I had been looking for any opportunity that I could take advantage of that might make my life better. Any job postings or advertisement I came across that looked like it could be beneficial, I would investigate it. Most of them never materialized. Then, one day, a co-worker at Hoffco-Comet Inc, told me that Hill’s Pet Nutrition was hiring. I looked at him and said, “This job stinks bad enough. Why would I want to go there?” Then he told me of the pay and the benefits. The pay was a little better, but the benefits sounded great. They would even pay for college classes. So there it was. Finally, an opportunity to go to college. I called my wife and she brought me a clean pair of clothes and a resume. I changed clothes at work and went right over and turned in my resume and an application. I knew I had a one percent chance of getting hired (around two-thousand people submitted resumes for fifteen open positions), but I also knew I had a zero chance of getting hired if I did not at least try. After nearly seven months of testing, phone interviews, and one-on-one interviews, I was hired. I now make twice what I made when my wife and I got married, we are living a lifestyle that I consider to be comfortable, and I am now in college classes.

One thing I remind myself of is where I came from. Starting out as a dirty faced little boy from a large family renting an old farmhouse, where we never had anything like too much, but somehow seemed to always have enough (even if I didn't think so at the time), to having a family of my own, being independent of government programs, and the possibility of a new career just over the horizon. I know my wife and my parents are excited for me, but I am sometimes a little fearful of what the future might bring. I fear the same things that Patricia Clark Smith (2004) cited as her parents' fears of her going to college, "... afraid I might not succeed, afraid I would and alter into some unknowable stranger," (p. 419). Make no mistake, I want to complete my college degree, but I will not sacrifice my family to do so. We all have the ability to move from one social class to another. The real question is, should we? Should we try to climb the ladder of success? Should we try to better our situations? Should we try to win the rat race, at all costs? There is nothing wrong with trying to improve your situation, as long as we do not let it consume us to the point that we forget why we are striving to reach our goals. The only problem with the ladder of success is once you get to the top, that's a long way to fall.

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ENG 132 ESSAY EXAMPLES

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Eng W132

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12 October 2009

From Greek Origins to Disney Fame: The Evolution of *Beauty and the Beast*

Fairy tales have long been a part of the childhoods of children in all cultures worldwide for centuries of time. Many of those stories are similar, and often variations of the same story are told in different languages and are suited to the customs of different peoples. Writers like the Grimm Brothers often wrote stories, which were later adapted into cartoons and storybooks. The tale of *Beauty and the Beast* is one of these fairy tales known to many cultures; even within the same culture there could be dozens of variations of it. In America and France's case, this is true. After the story developed over centuries, it was taken by Linda Woolverton to be written into one of the best animated films of all time—Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. It is this version which has become cherished by generations of American children and children across the world. However, the origins of *Beauty and the Beast* are not so simple to explain. And the versions of this story are nearly too numerous to count. Through ancient origins and

expanding variations, the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* changed into a Gothic drama, and eventually even Disney captured this beloved story.

Beauty and the Beast has no distinct or original author like the Grimm Brothers.

Instead this tale is known by its theme in modern and ancient versions; it is not known by the title itself until the 1750's and thereafter. So, in other words, what we know of *Beauty and the Beast* did not exist for centuries. It only existed by a theme of a girl and a beastly man; the man did not have to be an actual beast but could have what were considered "beastly" qualities, such as being arrogant or a womanizer. Although it is difficult to understand this difference, one freelance writer realizes this distinction with the tale. John K. Davis, in his article "Origins of Beauty and the Beast" from the web magazine Suite101.com, surprisingly reveals that this theme has been subtly coexisting in many modern stories like *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *King Kong* ("Origins"). In other words, the theme of *Beauty and the Beast* has been hiding in many unexpected places, even still in our very contemporary stories and films. The very first appearances of the theme are seen not on a television screen but in Ancient Greece. According to Davis, folklorists have traced the thread of the *Beauty and the Beast* components all the way back to Greek mythology, in the time of Apuleius' *Cupid and Psyche*. Italy then saw the theme of the tale in a story by the folklorist Straparola, in his *Re Porco*; in this particular story, the Beast character gets his beastly ways from his attitudes toward women ("Origins"). The version which could be argued as the full basis for all *Beauty and the Beast* themed stories to come is from a book of collected stories. France brings us this basis and also another well-known version of it. In 1740, Madame Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Gallon de Villeneuve wrote the book *La*

Jeune Américaine, et les Contes Marins mainly to entertain her friends, and one of the stories in her book is the base of the “Beauty and the Beast” that we are familiar with today (“Origins”). Madame Jeanne-Marie Le Prince de Beaumont steps in at this point to take the passed torch. In 1756, she wrote a collection and it included a shortened version of de Villeneuve’s *Beauty and the Beast* story (“Origins”). Thus, through literal centuries of adaptations, a tale with no formal title and varying content begins to take on its own shape with its own name of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Davis also writes of expanding subsequent versions in a second article, “The Many Versions of Beauty and the Beast,” upon Villeneuve and Beaumont’s roots. The year 1742 brings Pierre-Nieville de Claude la Chausee’s play *Amour pour Amour*, based on Villeneuve’s tale, and then thirty years later Andre Gretry wrote the opera *Zamire et Azor* (“Many Versions”). The 19th century alone claims over 70 versions produced of this fairy tale across cultures. The audience targeted for the numerous versions also is changing. Alex Flinn’s recent book, *Beastly*, was written for the targeted audience of young adults and teens (“Many Versions”). In the films industry, one can search for tons of different *Beauty and the Beast* like movies and cartoons, let alone television series. The most noted T.V. series has the Beauty character as a lawyer in New York City (“Many Versions”). Though the stories are all unique in their own ways, they all still share the underlying theme of a Beauty and a Beast. And, not only did the stories vary, but so did the medium in which they were made.

The tale’s form, though varying in content, comes from the Gothic drama skeleton. Gothic romance is defined by Susan Z. Swan in her article, “Gothic Drama in Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast*. Subverting Traditional Romance by Transcending the

Animal-Human Paradox,” as a writing style which began in the 1750s, Beaumont’s time, and became (and still is) increasingly popular with women. Often these stories are most receptive to young women in their older teenage years. In particular, there were two styles of Gothic dramas: the masculine and the feminine. The masculine is now the format for many of today’s horror stories while the feminine is the format for romantic tales, especially historical romance novels (Swan 353). This feminine style is characterized by five major components which Swan lists: a dark, towering castle; a main character as a young woman who must unravel a hidden secret (and during the story she will flee before realizing her own power); a romantic lead with flaws who must learn how to love; an evil rival for the romantic lead; and a happy ending, attained through some sort of transformation and redemption (353). The Gothic romance also has a psychological aspect revolving around a paradox of the dual animal and human natures within characters. Characters must integrate the two sides to become whole and able to truly love (Swan 353). Through her research, Swan also discovers that the heroine’s growth tends to be attached to her ability to be away from her parents, and the father is ideally an adventurer while the mother is oppressing to the heroine (354). Though there is no mother character, the Gothic outline for the story is most notably and physically seen in the Disney animated film.

Woolverton’s screenplay for the Disney *Beauty and the Beast* animated film fulfills all of the above requirements for the Gothic romance. Belle, the Beauty character, is a young woman presented as an outcast in her small French village for being an avid reader and lover of books, defying the stereotypes and traditional confines for women of the time. Beast is cursed by magic, and his castle and servants

are all changed as well. He is flawed and must learn how to love. Gaston portrays the evil alternate lead, obsessed with his narcissism, and is quite crazed by the end of the film. His role is also known as the Shadow Male in Gothic drama (Swan 356). When Belle's father Maurice gets lost and accidentally trespasses in Beast's castle, he is taken prisoner. Belle finds him, takes his place, and Beast lets him go. Belle eventually flees and is attacked by wolves; Beast saves her here, showing the first real signs of his character's development. Belle shows her development by returning with him, not as a prisoner but of her own free will. She rides into Gaston's siege against Beast's castle to help Beast. In the end, she proclaims her love for him, and he physically transforms back into a human just in time to survive. It is this physical transformation that signals the happy ending and is also a visible way to realize how much character transformations both characters have undergone.

In addition to mastering their version of the tale, Disney and Woolverton creates their first true feminist character in Belle. Swan notes that "she (Belle) is not the typical Disney fairy tale princess—she is the stuff of which Gothic heroines are made" (361). When Belle rides out to find her father on her own and later on to save Beast, never in both accounts did her physical beauty or a "fear of looking disheveled" ever take significance (Swan 361). And, not only does Woolverton make Belle such a steadfast, strong character, but her screenplay also brings a new element to the Gothic style. Woolverton realizes that the story is not just Beauty's (not just Belle's); it is also Beast's, seen right in the very title. Swan remarks, "this expands the Gothic formula in an intriguing way...both female *and* male must free themselves by uniting their thinking and feeling sides" (365). This is how a true, classic, and timeless love story should be.

Time is the concept by which we often measure the worth of stories and fairy tales. And while many fairy tales are indeed quite old, the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* goes further back and has a theme that resounds in nearly every culture. This tale has overcome time, has gone past expectation, and continues to do so with the mounting number of adaptations and variations of it. Through Disney's film and Linda Woolverton's writing, many generations were exposed to a true masterpiece built upon centuries of works. The success has even inspired the long-running Broadway play version of the film. By conquering multiple forms of media, this tale has continued to exist today. It is only a matter of time before a new book or film will be released. This celebration of a multicultural theme-turned-story is all deserving of a tale literally as old as time.

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30 September 2008

The Transformation of the American Dream

The originators of the American dream, Native Americans, believed that the way to achieve this vision was simply by respecting their ancestors and properly raising their young. When the colonists came to this country, they dreamed of religious freedom and the chance to raise their families in peaceful prosperity. Today, America has forgotten these basic principals. The richest people in America are always looking for a bigger bank account, while the most poverty stricken Americans can't survive without a cell phone. The American dream has changed from a modest vision to a materialistic nightmare with most people in this country thinking of the American dream in terms of money not in the joys and blessing that they receive every day.

As America was gaining power in the nineteen hundreds, European immigrants were arriving here by the boat load. They came with their heads full of promises. These promises were of good jobs, riches, and opportunities for their future generations. Many of these immigrants endured hardships just for the chance to see this great country of America (Howe). In reaching this destination, the dream of many immigrants was

fulfilled. Most of them started with nothing but the clothes on their back. With hard work and strong convictions, they built America into the super power that it is today. Life for them was not easy after coming here. They stood up to tyranny during two world wars and one great depression. These new Americans built great inventions and amassed great wealth. They volunteered at community centers and they shared their wealth with others less fortunate than themselves. They enjoyed huge families and even helped their extended families in times of need. It was very common to have homes with more than one generation living together. Their life was hard but nurturing; strict but balanced. Their dream was the many blessing of raising a family, having a steady job, and having stable homes in which to retire at each day's end.

Many Americans today are ambivalent toward the acts of our ancestors. We have forgotten that the cornerstone of our American dream was freedom and with this freedom comes a personal responsibility. As President William Clinton stated in his inaugural address in 1997, "Each and every one of us, in our own way, must assume personal responsibility—not only for ourselves and our families but for our neighbors and our nation." (111) Too often today, we allow others to lead us in ways that we don't respect or appreciate. One of the quickest ways to regain this leadership of ourselves is to vote and yet less than half of America will do so. Most Americans don't trust their politicians and many politicians don't respect the opinions of their constituents. Washington, D.C. has become too distant for common Americans, while Americans have become too distant with their communities.

According to a personal interview with Lynn Goodner on September 27, 2008, the baby boomer generation of the sixties understood and enjoyed many of the

exclusive freedoms in America. When they disagreed with the government, they reacted. Protesting was a common way for these Americans to express the direction that they wanted their American dream to follow. Many of this generation realized the opportunities of higher education, better paying jobs and comfortable retirements. They had a better standard of living than their parents. They shared this sense of calm materialism with the children they raised. This generation agreed with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when he proclaimed on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, "Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children." (105) They worked hard to give the next generation the same opportunities that they had growing up without regard to race or gender, thereby fulfilling their concept of the American dream.

Some American children wouldn't understand living one day without a cell phone, computer, or a car. Other American children are living in absolute poverty, wondering where the next meal will come from all while talking on a cell phone. Our children are too materialistic and we, as parents, have created this attitude. Even Oprah Winfrey believes that American children today are overly concerned with iPods instead of their education and she stated that as the main reason for deciding to build a school in Africa, not America (Winfrey). The American Dream is no longer about hopes and wishes of peace and freedom; it is about material items and riches. This can be seen in the shows that American teens are currently watching on MTV. The show, "My Sweet 16," is purely designed for the younger generation that is overly concerned with the power and prestige of family money and the friendships it buys. Everyone worries about themselves more than others. Money has become the root of the American dream. We are seeing this in every aspect of our lives. From the greedy leaders on Wall Street to

the households of common Americans, decisions are based on the mighty power of the dollar.

As with every generation, we share our wealth and riches with our children. Now we are having a hard time doing this. For the first time in the history of America, our children are living in poverty. We also have more children living in extreme wealth. We presently have a severely divided nation in regards to the American dream and we, collectively as a nation, have failed to give our children a better standard of living than past generations. While some live in gated communities, others are homeless. While some have the ability to eat healthy, other dine on fast-food simply due to the cost and others still don't have food at all. Even our volunteering spirit is diminishing and we have little regard to our neighbors or the service organizations that were founded to help others by our ancestors.

The basic dream of our elderly is to retire with a good standard of living, but even that is almost impossible in today's climate. Older Americans have to work, even after retirement, to survive the increases in healthcare costs. The volatility of the stock market has had drastic affects on their retirement savings. In today's American society, many elderly are living solely on Social Security and thereby living in poverty. We have failed as a country to respect the sacrifices of our ancestors. Ironically, the American dream for our elderly is a daily struggle just when it should be the most effortless.

The American dream is still out there for all of us. It is just waiting for Americans to remember its significance. We, like the boomers of the sixties, need to react. We need to lead this country back to the real American dream. This can be done in many ways. The first, and most important, is by voting in this Presidential election. Review the

policies of each candidate and make your decision with pertinent information. Then we need to hold those politicians accountable for the representation we receive. And as individuals, we need to stop living on our borrowed dollar. Basically, we need to live within our means and stop each day to enjoy the blessings of which we should be grateful.

Next, we need to steer our children into a different direction. We need to teach them the importance and value of helping others. Technology is great, but we also need to teach our children compassion by looking out for those less fortunate than us and humility to respect those different than us. They need to see the value in communication and good conversation. We need to lead our children by example, talk to them during dinner at home, read books to them, and above all tell them that we respect each other here in America.

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4 February 2008

Reading Response: Expressing Reader Individuality

A teenage girl describes the first day of her freshman year: the nervousness, the glances at old friends, the hope of finding some connection with any other human being among the throng of students streaming into the auditorium - and the crush of finding none. This scene from Laurie Halse Anderson's young adult novel, Speak, describes the deep division among students very plainly from one young woman's perspective. This straight forward explanation is powerful, yet each of four readers interviewed about their response to the text reported some unique view. The first reader, Nolan, is a nineteen year old college student; Jeff is a forty-year old father of three. Harley is a ten-year-old girl in fourth grade, and Dawn is a forty-five year old mother of four teenagers. Initial reader response consists of their perception of the plot of the story, how the reading made them feel emotionally, if they felt any physical response to the text and how who they are affects their response. The difference of opinion among all of these readers proves that gender, age and personal experience each play an important role in how readers receive any piece of text.

Gender plays a large part in reader response, and particularly to this excerpt of text. In spite of the fact that both male readers had experienced this type of gathering on the first day of high school, neither stated that they felt the fear the main character of

the passage did at the time. Nolan said that he had built strong relationships with his junior high friends, and therefore he felt very confident coming into his freshman convocation. Jeff, too, remembered feeling excited for and comfortable with his entrance. Both expressed having had less anxiety because most of their friendships seemed strong – perhaps stronger than those of their female peers. Harley said she thought that this kind of fear would “probably happen to girls before boys, because boys don’t say mean things, they fight and get it over with.” Dawn felt pity for the girl, and added that she had always been a bit jealous of male classmates that “never seemed to worry about things like that in high school.” Each reader mentioned some difference between male and female reactions to this type of situation, which made it apparent that gender affected their responses.

Each reader’s age gave them a different perspective of the scene as well. All three readers who have passed this “rite of passage” remembered their own experience differently, but related to the girl within the text in some way. Nolan responded with the feeling that by adulthood, “everyone has been there in some way.” He also said that the scene described reminds him of a movie, *Mean Girls*, which was popular when he was in high school. Apparently, the movie depicted the story of a teenage girl getting revenge on a group of her peers that had made her life miserable for no reason at all. Jeff distinctly remembered wearing bell-bottom jeans on the first day of seventh grade, only to learn that all of his classmates had updated to straight-legged over the summer. Laughing, he added that he now feels far removed from “worrying over what other people think at forty-years old.” Harley found the girls experience sad and a bit scary, but summed up by saying that she “[does] not understand how teenagers think.” Dawn

said she just wanted to “tell her it will be all right,” that “these things do pass ... at forty-five, things like that [won’t] still hurt.” Each reader mentioned something that had to do with their current stage of life or age when asked to respond to this text, which shows the impact age has on reader interpretation.

Perhaps the most notable difference among reader response to this text was based on personal experience. All four readers said they had felt, at one time or another ostracized by their peers and distressed over strained relationships with those whom they had previously considered close friends. Nolan recalled a time when his friends seemed to turn away from him after he “chose a girl over them.” He said he was deeply relieved when he was able to rebuild those relationships with friends after he and his girlfriend split. Harley, having had little life experience, felt frightened by the idea that one may actually be forced to suffer through life without friendship or love. Her failure to realize that young adulthood is only part of life points to her inexperience. Those who had more life experience, however, expressed sympathy but felt the experience was exaggerated in relation to what Jeff referred to as “the big picture.” He went on to say that as a police officer and father, he felt sorry for her and “wanted to help her see that this is not the end of the world.” Dawn, however, associated more closely with the main character having recently helped her daughters understand similar situations in high school. She responded to the tale with hope because “the way things are in high school are sure to change.” Overall, readers with more life experience saw the situation as fully survivable, and therefore of little importance later in life.

I was surprised that there was such disparity in response, since my own initial reaction to the text was quite intense. I felt strong sympathy for the young lady, and her

sadness touched me on a very personal level. While I suppose I associate with her as a female, I am far past entering high school, and yet I worry any time I enter a new situation. I fear that I will fear to connect with my peers, and will spend my time there lonely and sad. Actually, I feel that my life experiences have brought me more understanding of this sad young lady. I have survived that point in life, but not without scars that I fear she, too, will have when she leaves high school behind. I enjoyed being a teenager, but never felt that it was easy; and I would certainly never choose to return. There is a wonderful feeling that comes with having survived high school and finding that as we mature, we also feel more at home in our own being and much more confident despite our current circumstances.

Every reader finds unique meaning among the words of Laurie Halse Anderson's Speak. Some readers may immediately feel a connection with the character or situation, while others may be forced to rely on imagination or distant memory to find some relevance. Women and girls appear to connect with Speak on not only the gender level, but on some emotional level of shared experience or deep empathy, while men appear to take a sympathetic view of the young lady's plight due in part to some presumed gender differences. Older readers feel a sense of parental concern for the character, while younger readers seem to find the situation more intimidating; and those who have experienced similar situations see more hope than others, agreeing that the situation through which the character is passing will someday be but a memory. Responses vary, because each reader comes to the text with a different set of values gauged by age, gender and life experiences.

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The Three Little Pigs and Environmental Ideologies

Traditionally, the “Three Little Pigs” is a fairytale which espouses the moral and physical virtues of hard work versus laziness. In many time-honored versions of the story, the three little pigs are sent by their mother to make their way in the world. Once on their own, the two lazier brothers haphazardly build their homes out of straw and sticks in order that they will have more time to play. As the result of such disregard, the Big, Bad Wolf proceeds to blow down the houses made of straw and sticks and eat the two fun loving, lazy brothers. Meanwhile the third brother labors long and hard over the construction of his brick home. The Big, Bad Wolf tries but fails to blow down the brick house – it is just too well built (Seibert 26). Due to his forethought and hard work, the third brother survives the wolf’s attack and goes on to live a long and happy life. The original “Three Little Pigs” tells a story with a moral ending. It is also a story that allows for seamless transitions and text revisions.

Like many fairy tales, the “Three Little Pigs” has often been rewritten to reflect new themes and ideologies. The following version of the “Three Little Pigs” is one such revision. In this version of the story, contrasting environmental ideologies are explored.

As explained by Timothy O’Riordan in the article “Frameworks for Choice,” the environmental movement in America has grown profoundly during the past twenty-five years, and with such growth inevitably comes conflict. According to O’Riordan, environmental ideologies are divided into two main categories. The ecocentric view dictates that nature’s law reigns supreme. Ecocentrists stress the importance of restraining growth, utilizing low tech alternatives, creating renewable energy sources, and building strong community ties. In contrast, the technocentric view is based on the notion that the exploitation of natural resources is necessary for continued economic growth and dominance. Technocentrists believe that humans are superior to all other life forms and that technology is the answer to everything (O’Riordan 7). Throughout history, economic and material growth has been the compulsion of society (Satterfield 136). The recent emergence of an established environmental movement though has set into motion a fundamental shift in society’s belief system. Expansionism is beginning to abate, and alternative theories abound (Satterfield 136). The dual nature of environmental ideologies, and the effect of such beliefs on the individual, is the basis for the following version of the “Three Little Pigs.”

The Three Little Pigs: A Story Retold

Once there were three little pigs that lived with their mother, an environmental activist, in Oregon. Mother Pig and her sons led an ecocentric lifestyle, and as such, they lived on a self contained commune. A nearby geothermal hot spring provided the family with unlimited energy, a community garden provided the essentials for their vegan diets, and a local spring was their source of drinking water. Mother Pig and her

sons lived off the grid, and that was just the way they liked it. The family's ecocentric beliefs led them to follow nature's law and serve as wildlife warriors. Theirs was a peaceful but busy life, for everyone had many chores to oversee. The first little pig was responsible for maintaining the family's compost site. While, the second little pig traveled the hillsides in search of recyclables, and the third little pig was in charge of the community garden. One day after the chores were complete, Mother Pig announced, "I have taught you all that I know. It is now time for you to go out into the world and live as one with Mother Nature." Each of the three little pigs then gathered their meager belongings and put them in organic, cotton sacks. As the three little pigs left out the door, Mother Pig called out, "Farewell my little warriors. May your ecological footprints always be small."

In keeping with their industrious and resourceful upbringing, the three little pigs immediately began building a home of their own. In order to lessen their impact on the surrounding landscape, the pigs chose to live together. They decided to build their house out of straw since it was an indigenous and naturally renewable material. Unbeknownst to the three little pigs though, they had chosen to build their straw house on land being considered for commercial development. A group of technocentric developers with dreams of skyscrapers and super malls had a collective eye on the land where the three little pigs built their house of straw. Techno C. Wolfe was the leader of this expansion loving group, and he was determined to not let three little pigs stand in the way of progress. One calm and beautiful evening, the three little pigs heard a knock at the door.

“Little pigs, little pigs, leave this land or you will feel my wrath,” shouted Techno C. Wolfe.

The three little pigs were shocked by the threat of violence, but they managed to calmly reply. “We will not leave this land. Not by the hair on our chinny, chin, chins.”

This only served to further enrage Techno C. Wolfe, and caused him to bellow even louder. “You will leave right this minute, or I will huff and puff until I blow this house down!” Techno C. Wolfe then did as he had promised. He huffed, and he puffed, and he blew down the house of straw. The next day, Techno C. Wolfe had the land cleared of debris and immediately began building an 18-hole golf course.

Meanwhile, the three little pigs escaped Techno C. Wolf’s attack with not a moment to spare. After spending the night in a nearby forest, the three little pigs went right to work on building a new home. This time they decided to use sticks since they too were an indigenous, renewable resource. Unfortunately, the technocentric developers wanted their new land too. One calm and beautiful evening, the three little pigs heard a knock at the door.

“Little pigs, little pigs, leave this land or you will feel my wrath,” shouted Techno C. Wolfe.

By this time the peace loving pigs were beginning to get upset, but they still managed to calmly reply. “We will not leave this land. Not by the hair on our chinny, chin, chins.”

This made Techno C. Wolfe angrier than ever, and as such, his shouts shook the very trees. “You will leave right this minute, or I will huff and puff until I blow this house down!” Techno C. Wolfe then did as he had promised. He huffed, and he puffed, and he

blew down the house of sticks. The next day, Techno C. Wolfe had the land cleared of debris and immediately began building a strip mall.

Once again, the three little pigs escaped Techno C. Wolf's attack with not a moment to spare. After spending the night in a nearby forest, the three little pigs went right to work on building a new home. This time they decided to use environmentally friendly bricks made from recycled waste products. Yet again, the never satisfied, technocentric developer's wanted the land upon which the three little pigs built their new house. One calm and beautiful evening, the three little pigs heard a knock at the door.

"Little pigs, little pigs, leave this land or you will feel my wrath," shouted Techno C. Wolfe.

Now the pigs were mad, and the calm had gone out of their reply. "We *will not* leave this land! Not by the hair on our chinny, chin, chins."

This made Techno C. Wolfe furious, and with popping veins and bulging eyes, he bellowed to the sky. "You will leave right this minute, or I will huff and puff until I blow this house down!" Techno C. Wolfe then did as he had promised. He huffed, and he puffed, but the house of brick did not blow down. Not one to be easily deterred, Techno C. Wolfe continued to huff and puff until he fell over dead. An autopsy later determined that his high stress lifestyle and unhealthy diet led to a massive heart attack. The three little pigs were grateful to be alive though, and since Techno C. Wolf had no friends or family, they paid to have his body cremated and his ashes spread on the 18th hole of the town's newest golf course.

The End

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The Epilogue to Happily Ever After:

Intertextuality in *The Jolly Christmas Postman*

Intertextuality is the concept of using parts of one story, usually fairly well known, in another story. The word, “intertextuality” was coined by writer and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, in 1966. It was originally defined as “the insertion of history into a text and of this text into history” (Kristeva). It has since developed and been discussed in many different lights. *The Jolly Christmas Postman* is about a British mailman who delivers letters to various fairy tale characters and is an excellent example of intertextuality in children’s literature. Envelopes actually containing these letters are interspersed throughout the pages. *The Jolly Christmas Postman* includes a multitude of characters from fairy tales, Mother Goose Rhymes, and Disney movies. While intertextuality can help readers to make connections between stories and provide entertainment, it can also cause confusion when stories are translated and read by persons from other cultures.

The Jolly Christmas Postman is rich with examples of intertextuality that are familiar to children who have grown up in Great Britain and the United States. In the story, the fairy tale characters are not only mentioned, but become more fully developed

as other facets of their personalities are revealed. For example, Goldilocks has a younger sister and Baby Bear, from “Goldilocks and The Three Bears,” has a younger brother, Babbier Bear. The characters from these stories interact in ways not described in the traditional fairy tales. Goldilocks writes a letter to the three bears and Mr. Wolf gives Little Red Riding Hood a Christmas present. The present is a board game where the player moves along the spaces and is either delayed or advanced by various fairy tale characters. The Jolly Postman is nervous about delivering a letter to Mr. Wolf, only to find him celebrating Christmas with The Three Little Pigs. The letter is from Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother and contains drawings of wolf disguises and how to spot them, done jokingly by Little Red Riding Hood herself. Humpty Dumpty is recuperating in the hospital receives a puzzle of himself from All the King’s Horses and All the King’s Men. He gets so excited that he falls out of bed and gets cracked again. The Gingerbread Man also receives a story booklet from the Pat ’O Cake Bakers. This shows fairy tales and nursery rhymes in complex interaction.

There are also more examples that are less prominent, but still add to the story. On the front cover of the book there is a drawing of characters from various fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and Disney characters that are united, dancing around a Christmas tree. On one page of the book where the Jolly Postman is riding through town are illustrations of the three fiddlers playing cricket with their instruments and a snowball, the beanstalk from “Jack and the Beanstock” swaying in the sky, King Cole’s castle, the seven dwarves, and the dish running away with the spoon. At the end of the story, the Jolly Postman is shown sitting in front of the fire in his home. In the background are mice running up a clock and there is a picture of Cinderella and Prince Charming,

presumably at their wedding, hanging over the mantel. There are also letters to Santa Claus, whom the Jolly Postman visits at the end of the book. Some of the senders include, Bo Peep asking for binoculars and Tweedledee and Tweedledum.

There is a major assumption made when writing a book that includes intertextuality. It is that the reader is familiar with the previous texts to which the story refers. In the book, *The Jolly Christmas Postman*, the reader must have background knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of fairy tales, Mother Goose Rhymes, and Disney movies in order for the book to make sense. In Goldilock's letter to the three bears she draws a cartoon where the three bears, Papa Bear, Baby Bear, and Babier Bear are each sitting at a table with empty plates asking, "Who ate my pudding?" Then, Mama Bear walks out and says "Be quiet you silly bears, I haven't served it yet." While this is humorous to most Americans or British who have read the story throughout their childhood, if a person did not understand the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," it would not make sense.

We currently live in a global society. Books no longer remain in the county where they were written. While it can be interesting to hear stories from other cultures, it can also be a problem with books containing intertextuality. *The Jolly Christmas Postman* has been translated into Spanish, *El Cartero Simpatico en Navidad*, and Dutch, *De Puike Pakket Post*.

Throughout the translation of the book in both languages, the translator was careful to adhere to the rhyming, poetic form in which the book was originally written. The translator uses various techniques including, literal translation, substitution, compensation, and occasionally, deletion. Substitution is used in cases where the

reader in the second language might not necessarily understand the fairy tale reference. “The Barracks,” a reference to all the King’s Horses and all the King’s Men from the “Humpty Dumpty” rhyme, (is changed) in “De Hoftimmerman,” which refers to a similar, but slightly different Dutch rhyme” (Desmet 38). Another case where this was used was “Banbury Cross.” “...is rendered as Krentebolsward,” a combination of “krentebol” and “Bolsward.” “Krentebol,” which is a kind of bun, retains in this sense a tenuous link with the source text, and “Bolsward” is an existing Dutch city located in Friesland” (Desmet 38).

Various studies have been conducted which examine the way the book has been read in different countries. The Diana Schwinge’s article, “Making Connections Between Languages, Between Cultures, Between Texts: Using Hybrid Literacy Practices in Bilingual Elementary School Class,” describes how a number of teachers taught the book, *The Jolly Postman*, and the students’ reactions. Ms. Santiago, a second grade teacher from Philadelphia, teaches a class where the students’ primary language is Spanish. While her students had read various fairy tales, they struggled to make connections between the book and other fairy tales. In one situation Ms. Santiago wanted her students to notice the beanstalk in the background of a picture as the one from “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Translations can sometimes complicate situations such as this. The students in Ms. Santiago’s class had read a translation that described a giant magic bean, not a beanstalk, so the students were not necessarily looking for the correct object.

This reaction was much different from British teacher, Ms. Bromley’s second grade class. Ms. Bromley used the same book in her classroom as well. When asked

to find examples from other fairy tales nearly every student immediately found an example. This was perhaps easier for her students as the book was originally written by British authors. On the same page as the beanstalk are King Cole's fiddlers playing Cricket. This was easy for the British students to grasp because it is frequently shown on television in England and it is less common in the United States (Schwinge).

To young readers, *The Jolly Christmas Postman* might seem to be a simple, but enjoyable story that is reminiscent of other favorite fairy tales. Yet, when more closely examined, one realizes the enormous complexity of the story, made even more so when translated into another language or read by someone whose first language is not English. What may seem like obvious connections to fairy tales for those children who have grown up with the traditional Mother Goose Rhymes and Disney stories are actually deeply rooted in a cultural context that is not entirely understood by all.

Native American Folktales

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Try to imagine Cinderella—the beautiful ball gown, the lights, the music, and the handsome prince--in a wigwam in North America. How would the story be different? Native American folktales written about a Cinderella figure vary from the Charles Perrault version of *Cinderella* that I read as a girl. The biggest difference was that in Perrault's version the protagonist relied on the use of magic to meet her prince while in the two Native American versions, the protagonists relied on the belief in themselves to meet their princes. The two Native American tales portrayed their main characters as being more representative of today's women, as they forcefully pursued their futures rather than just waiting on the sideline as Charles Perrault's Cinderella did.

The first tale of these strong female figures is *Sootface: An Ojibwa Cinderella Story*, retold by Robert D. San Souci in 1994, and illustrated by Daniel San Souci. San Souci based his folktale on the tale of the Ojibwa Indian tribe (San Souci, 1994, preface). The Ojibwa are still in existence today, and 150 bands live throughout their original homelands in the northern United States and Southern Canada. The tribes living within the United States are referred to as the Chippewa and those living in Canada are referred to as the Ojibwa. There are many Ojibwa legends and fairytales because storytelling is very important to the Ojibwa Indian culture. Many traditional Ojibwa stories teach important lessons to children while other stories are told just for fun (Reddish, 1998).

The second story is entitled *The Rough-Face Girl*, written by Rafe Martin in 1992 and illustrated by David Shannon (Martin, 1992). His folktale came from the Algonquin tribe of Native Americans. There are more than half a million Native American people

today belonging to Algonquian tribes. Algonquian people live throughout the United States from California to Maine and throughout southern Canada from Alberta to Labrador. "Story telling is a living breathing creature. It thrives, grows and adapts in the heart of each new generation of story tellers" (Reddish, 1998).

Both stories are about an Indian girl who lived with her father and two older sisters. In these two versions, there was neither an evil step-mother nor step-sisters as there were in Perrault's version. Another difference between the Perrault version and the Native American versions is that Cinderella maintained her outer beauty, yet in *Rough- Face Girl* and *Sootface*, the protagonists' outer beauty is marred. Though the sisters were to share the workload equally, the two older sisters gave most of the work to their younger sister (San Souci, 1994 p.1). *Sootface* and *Rough- Face Girl* tended the fire from early morning to late at night. Their hair and clothes smelled of smoke from the fire pit and her face and hair had been scorched by the heat from the fire. There were always remnants of soot on their hair, face, and body. Their faces and arms were scarred from being too close to the open flames. Despite their deformities, *Rough- Face Girl* and *Sootface* dreamed of marriage to the Invisible Being. *Rough-Face Girl* went to her father and proclaimed, "I am going to marry the Invisible Being, for wherever I look, I see his face" (Martin, p. 14).

The two Native American versions of Cinderella portrayed the "prince" as a mystical, invisible being. He was given power from a medicine man to make himself invisible (San Souci, p. 7). Unlike Cinderella, the Invisible Being had a kind sister who took care of him. One day the invisible warrior told his sister, "Go to the village across

the water, and say that I will marry the woman who can see me. This means she has a kind and honest heart” (San Souci, 1994, p. 7).

In Martin’s version, the two older sisters asked their father for new clothes and jewelry so they could go and see the sister (who has no name in either Native American version) of the Invisible Being and have a chance at marriage. They received their new wardrobes and proceeded together to find the Invisible Being’s sister. As soon as his sister saw them, she asked them if they had seen the Invisible Being. They replied, "Yes." Then, for proof, the Invisible Being’s sister asked them two questions: What was his bow made of and what was his sled made of? The two girls gave wrong answers and, instead of making them leave, the sister took them to the teepee where they spent the night in fear and saw nothing but the Invisible Being’s bow hanging from the top of the tepee. They returned home, ashamed (Martin, 1992, p. 12). In San Souci’s version the girls went to see the Invisible Warrior’s sister individually. They both said they had seen her brother. Again she asked them the same two questions but they got the answers wrong and they were sent away. They each returned home and treated Sootface even more cruelly (San Souci, 1994, pp. 11-12).

Martin’s version had Rough- Face Girl asking for beads, moccasins and a buckskin dress before she went to see the warrior’s sister. Her father gave her an old worn-out pair of moccasins (that were his) and some broken shells. Rough-Face Girl strung the shells to make a necklace, soaked her father’s shoes in the lake (to make them softer), and used the bark from birch trees to make herself a new outfit. As she left her village wearing frayed, oversized moccasins and a dress made of birch bark, she is ridiculed by the people and called “ugly” (Martin, 1992, p. 15). However, Rough-

Face Girl walked proudly through the village and never looked back. Her faith, wisdom, strong character, and unyielding belief in herself gave her the courage to pass the test and marry the Algonquin warrior. He saw the beauty within her even before he saw her in person (Martin, 1992, p. 27).

In *Sootface: An Ojibwa Cinderella Story*, Sootface didn't go to her father to seek finery before going to see the Indivisible Warrior. She asked her sisters to lend her clothes and help her with her hair, "Sootface was stung by their unkindness. But she was determined to present herself to the warrior and his sister" (San Souci, 1994, p. 15). She went to the woods and gathered the birch bark required to make her a new skirt. Her necklace was made from wildflowers, and she soaked her own moccasins in the nearby spring (San Souci, 1994, p. 16). As Sootface walked away from the village, despite the unkind laughter, she never looked back. Through her self-determination, courage and inner qualities, she was given the husband she saw in her dreams. After passing the tests presented by the Invisible Warrior's sister, Sootface bathed inside the wigwam and was given new clothes to wear. She saw her reflection in the bathwater and told the sister that the Invisible Warrior's sister had made her beautiful. The sister replied, "Your beauty was merely hidden beneath the scars and ashes" (San Souci, 1994, p. 28). Upon meeting her new prince (in the flesh), her name was changed to Dawn-Light (San Souci, 1994, p. 30).

Despite the minor differences between the two Native American versions, Sootface and Rough-Face Girl showed a sharp contrast to the character of the protagonist portrayed in Charles Perrault's version of *Cinderella*. Sootface and Rough-Face Girl represented today's women as they forcefully pursued their futures. On the

other hand, Cinderella showed outer, as well as inner beauty. The two Native American folktales portrayed inner beauty as the most important, perhaps only, criterion for achieving future happiness and success.

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UPPER DIVISION ENG EXAMPLES

(Research Project for Advanced English Course)

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Beowulf: Humanist Masterpiece or Pagan Epic?

The history behind the epic poem *Beowulf* is rather mysterious. Although critics agree on the general time period of the poem's composition, the actual events that may

have influenced the plot, along with who exactly wrote the poem and the intentions of the author, remain quite hidden. Also unclear is whether or not the intertwining of both pagan and Christian ideals in *Beowulf* is intentional by the author or a result of variations that come with the oral tradition of Anglo-Saxon culture. A critical article written by Thomas D. Hill titled, "The Christian Language and Theme of Beowulf," argues that the author of *Beowulf* crafts a story from Anglo-Saxon life that includes both the importance of ancestry and *wyrd* as well as the influence of Christianity on the culture. However, the sporadic Christian references in the poem, the oral traditions in Anglo-Saxon culture, and the strong emphasis on Anglo-Saxon values in the poem could indicate the original creator of *Beowulf* did not include Christian themes in his epic, but rather focused on composing a tale that immortalized the Anglo-Saxons and would be cherished for generations to come.

Hill views *Beowulf* as a humanist text, composed by a Christian author who was not willing to completely sacrifice the traditional pagan beliefs of Anglo-Saxon culture and found a way to implement those themes into the story without threatening the "Christian-ness" of the poem. Hill states the author of *Beowulf* "is presenting a radical synthesis of pagan and Christian history – which is without parallel in Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Latin literature" (198). If the author of *Beowulf* did indeed write this epic with that intention, Hill is certainly correct in his argument. But although there are many references to Christian themes in *Beowulf*, those themes are not at the center of the poem; they often seem out of place or forced to fit within the context of the story. For example, toward the end of the story, when Beowulf sets out to investigate why the Dragon is attacking his people, he takes with him "eleven comrades" (2401). When

Beowulf discovers the man who stole the cup from the Dragon's lair, he "was now added as a thirteenth to their number" (2407). This is clearly an allusion to Christ and his disciples. Beowulf is the Christ figure, the eleven men Christ's loyal disciples, and the thief Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. Later, when Beowulf and Wiglaf attack the Dragon, they rally three times before defeating the Dragon. Those three difficult and fatal assaults on the Dragon could represent the three days Christ spent in the grave before rising again. When Christ rose from the grave, he overcame death, just as Beowulf and Wiglaf overcame the terror caused to their people by conquering the Dragon. These details – the number of Beowulf's companions and attempts to kill the dragon – are easily identified, but simply inconsequential in the overall story. These Biblical connections do nothing to advance the plot of the poem or give insight to the listener concerning the events of the story. It would appear that the Christian themes were added as an afterthought in the story, rather than a foundation upon which the whole of *Beowulf* was built. Therefore, it can be concluded that the references to Biblical events or values were not included in the original version of *Beowulf*, but later added to appease an increasingly Christian, rather than pagan, audience.

As stated above, Hill argues that the author of the *Beowulf* approaches the story from a humanistic perspective (204) and intentionally threads Christianity and paganism together. Hill states that perhaps the author used the conflicting viewpoints to challenge the authority of the church by endorsing paganism. Hill defends this position by comparing *Beowulf* to other Old Germanic literature that utilizes the same technique (210). As a result, Hill assumes the *Beowulf* text has remained unaltered for thousands of years and exists today in its original form and context. However, this interpretation

may be questioned in light of the fact that Anglo-Saxon culture was built upon the oral tradition; Donoghue notes that “tribes all over Europe had fashioned a sophisticated practice of poetry, which was learned and passed on by memory... Anglo-Saxon scop[s] either improvised a poem or recounted a traditional story in verse” (xv). It is highly improbable that some of the details and themes in *Beowulf* did not change as it was orally passed from one generation to the next. It is arguable that the Christian themes in *Beowulf* were later added by Anglo-Saxon scop[s] that lived during the decline of paganism and needed to align the epic with the growing popularity of Christianity. The similarity between Christ’s death and the death of Beowulf seems too parallel and obvious to have been written into the original story; the facts (such as the number of thanes who accompanied Beowulf and the number of times he attacked the dragon) could have easily been changed to please a Christian audience. Also, if this author were controversial, as Hill suggests, his story would have been rejected by the Christian population, disregarded and forgotten, rather than widely spread and rehearsed through the oral tradition. *Beowulf* was not written as a Christian text with pagan values added in to please the audience, but rather it was written as a pagan text, true to the Anglo-Saxon culture, with the Christian ideals added later to accommodate the shift in Anglo-Saxon culture from pagan to Christian

Hill suggests in his article that the Christian aspects which surface in the story, such as Beowulf’s prayer to God, illustrate the poet’s Christian values. However, if the origins of the Anglo-Saxon culture are examined, it is evident that the pagan society cared little for Christian principles, such as belief in God’s sovereignty and committing actions only if they are pleasing to God. Rather, the Anglo-Saxons placed great

confidence in the concept of *wyrd* (fate) and the heroic ideal. This is evident in several instances in the poem where success is attributed to fate. Early in the tale, when Beowulf describes his battle with Breca to Unferth, he says, "Often, for undaunted courage / fate spares the man it has not already marked" (572-573); there is no mention of God's deliverance or help. When Beowulf and his loyal thanes arrive in Herot and are presented to Hrothgar, Beowulf tells the king that he will fight Grendel and to not lament his death should he perish, but rather to accept that "Fate goes ever as fate must" (455); again fate, rather than God, seems to be governing the lives of men. And before Beowulf departs to fight the Dragon, the author notes, "His fate hovered near, unknowable but certain" (2421); this indicates a belief that fate controls the known and unknown, rather than a belief in Almighty sovereignty. By continually emphasizing the Anglo-Saxon ideal of *wyrd*, the author stresses the importance of this concept in the *Beowulf* text and thereby affirms that Anglo-Saxon, not Christian, values lie at the heart of the story.

The emphasis on the heroic ideal, which is also a foundational piece of Anglo-Saxon culture, is further proof that *Beowulf* is not an intentional Christian text. Beowulf exemplifies the heroic ideal through his loyalty, humility, selflessness, generosity, confidence, and bravery. Beowulf's selflessness and generosity may be seen in his willingness to help the Danes by defeating Grendel, and later Grendel's mother. Of his own volition, Beowulf takes his thanes and sails to Herot to assist Hrothgar; he is neither summoned nor assigned to this mission, but considers it his duty as an able-bodied man to help those who are in danger. Beowulf faithfully serves Hrothgar as a

thane and is rewarded for his loyalty with gifts and honor. And although he displays his confidence and bravery in the battles he fights, Beowulf is never boastful (beot) of his accomplishments, which demonstrates his humility. These are all qualities that fulfill the heroic ideal of the pagan Anglo-Saxon culture. If the author of *Beowulf* wrote from a predominantly Christian perspective, as Hill claims, and utilize the pagan principles simply to tie the poem to Anglo-Saxon values, then Christian ideals such as salvation, prayer, thanksgiving, sacrifice, and obedience should have been more prevalent and crucial to the plots and events in *Beowulf*.

The epic poem found in *Beowulf* demonstrates and celebrates the uniqueness and richness of the Anglo-Saxon culture. The emphasis on the importance of fate, the fulfillment of the heroic ideal, and the continuation of the oral tradition illustrates that *Beowulf* is truly an original piece of Anglo-Saxon literature. The author sought to preserve his heritage in the form of poetry, confident that the oral tradition would see to it's telling for many generations to come. And although some details have been changed over the years, there is no doubt that *Beowulf* is one of the finest pieces of literature ever written.

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W231 ESSAY EXAMPLES

The Effects of Digital Convergence
in Our Work and Our World

for
High School Seniors Entering
College Pursuing a Career Relating
to Digital Technology

by
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December 3, 2008

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High School Seniors
Entering College
Pursuing a Career Relating to Digital Technology

Dear Student:

I am preparing this report to help explain the effects of digital convergence in our work and our world. I am a graphic designer and a student pursuing a Bachelor Degree in Computer Graphics Technology, and I have first hand knowledge of the effects it has had on myself throughout my career. This unbiased report is intended for high school seniors, however it may be beneficial to anyone seeking the effects of digital convergence.

Digital convergence (the merging of distinct technologies, industries, or devices into a unified whole) has been around since the 1930's. What started as a computation device to calculate the trajectory of weapons fired through the air or water, the computer is one of the world's greatest technological achievements.

One of my goals in this report is to supply you with a brief history of the computer by describing life before the computer, the invention of the computer and ultimately how it has evolved to where it is today. My other goal is to explain why we use digital technology, the advantages, the disadvantages, and future of digital convergence.

In conclusion, I trust that you will find my information unbiased and you may have questions after evaluating this report. A works cited page is located at the end of the report, which you can refer to further investigate this subject.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Cranfill
Junior, Graphic Designer

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ABSTRACT

Digital convergence is the idea that as the worlds of entertainment, computing, and communication go digital, they can be combined to create exciting new products, services, and business opportunities. (Silverthorne) We use digital convergence in our lives everyday whether we realize it or not. I imagine anyone who is reading this either owns or knows someone who owns a cell phone. The cell phone has become the most known form of digital convergence that we use today and the potential for future achievements keeps advancing at increasing speeds.

Digital convergence has made its way into our homes and our work, and it is showing how effectively time can be managed, how efficiently cost can be managed or if the consumer uses it just for entertainment purposes. Although there are many advantages to digital convergence, suppliers usually feel the effects of the disadvantages. Some examples of digital convergence:

- Computer
- Cell Phone
- Videogame Console
- Tivo or other Digital Video Recorder

INTRODUCTION

Digital Convergence (also known as technology convergence, or simply, convergence) can be defined broadly or narrowly. The narrow concept involves the delivery of multimedia, telephone, computer data, and broadcast technologies through a common distribution mechanism (such as cable) directly to your desktop. The broad concept is the fusion of two or more technologies into a single technology. (Bleicher) Convergence's basis is having a common standard to send content, common technology to receive content and a common method of distributing the content.

The concept of convergence plays important roles in our everyday lives at home. Web based televisions and phones, phones with built-in cameras, and interactive games that connect to anyone through out the world are some examples how everyone has consumed digital technology. The idea that anyone has the ability to talk to anyone, anywhere on a cell phone smaller than a deck of cards, browse the web, and take a photo with the same device is not only a great idea, it is reality as we know it. This single device that we rely on so much everyday brings us to convergence in our work.

Convergence has drastically increased in today's work environment. This increase comes from the use of cell phone, handheld digital organizers, computers and other digital devices. The cell phone is the best example of current and future potential convergence.

As you can already see there are many advantages in this age of digital convergence. However, there are disadvantages as well. In this report I will explain the facts about digital convergence, how we use it at home, how we use it at work, the advantages of convergence and the disadvantages of convergence. I hope to educate you on how this benefits society and to allow you to have a positive outlook when it comes to dealing with convergence in your life.

DIGITAL CONVERGENCE

What is Digital Convergence?

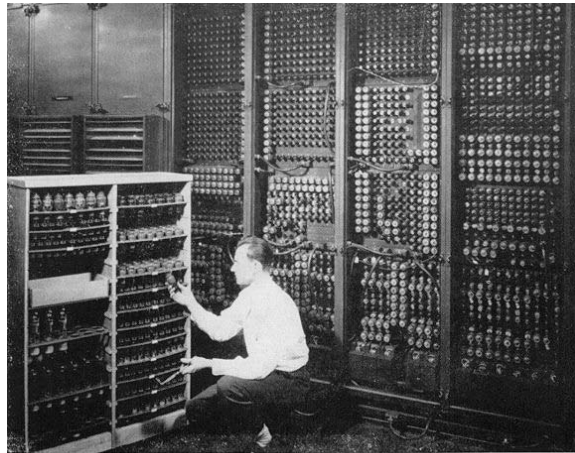
According to David Yoffie, the Max and Doris Starr Professor of International Business Administration at Harvard Business School and an expert in technology strategy states digital convergence is the idea that as the worlds of entertainment, computing, and communication go digital, they can be combined to create exciting new products, services, and business opportunities.

(Silverthorne) As we advance into the future, we can expect this idea to develop and emerge at increasing speeds.

Brief History of the computer

Prior to the actual machine known as the computer, a computer was a person who made calculations. Logarithmic and Trigonometric tables were assets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These tables reduced the amount of time and the amount of operational steps in problem solving. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, tables were being produced for several different occupations: navigational tables for mariners, star tables for astronomers, civil engineering tables for architects, and so on. (Aspray, Campbell-Kelly 10) Not a single mechanical device was used in producing these tables.

In the 1930's the first computer was built to calculate trajectories of weapons fired through the air or water-and it initially had a staff of about thirty people. After World War II, eliminating vacations accelerated some college undergraduate programs and the schools took on war-training and electronics-research programs. The main training activity was the Engineering, Science, Management, War Training program, which was an intensive course designed to train physicists and mathematicians for technical posts-particularly in electronics, in which there was great manpower shortage. (Aspray, Campbell-Kelly 81) ENIAC, the first electronic computer was a huge machine. It was 30 feet by 50 feet and in the shape of a U. It housed thirty separate units, plus power supply, forced-air cooling, weighed over thirty tons, and contained 19,000 vacuum tubes, 1,500 relays, and hundreds of thousands of resistors, capacitors and inductors.



Replacing a bad tube meant checking among ENIAC's 19,000 possibilities.

Figure.1 (U.S. Army photo, from archives of the ARL Technical Library)

Today's computers are small and can weigh just a few pounds. They can be tailored to the individual's needs and the cost is reasonable considering how the computer originated. Computers can connect to each other from practically anywhere at any time and today's computers do not only perform a handful of functions, they perform multiple functions and calculations at a high rate of speed.

Convergence at home

Digital convergence can be found all over the home. For example, just about everyone you can think of owns a television. Now we have the ability to watch

our regular programs whether pre-recorded or live, and record them to a hard drive. This allows us to pause, rewind and even fast-forward through commercials during the program. This also allows the viewer to watch their favorite program at their convenience.

Another example of convergence in the home and probably the example your kids will be able to relate to more, is gaming systems. Gaming systems such as Sony Playstation, Xbox 360, and the computer can interact with other gaming systems that are connected to the internet. Players are able to play each other no matter which county, state, country, or continent they live in. When a gaming console is connected to the internet the user is able to communicate by the console as well as a Bluetooth headset. The Bluetooth headset allows the user to talk to the opponent and the voice is carried through the television screen, similar to talking on the phone to the opponent while playing the game. In addition, if there are multiple players of one game, all players can communicate this way and all players are able to hear each other through the television set.

Although there are many examples of digital convergence in the home, the last example I want to mention is the computer. The computer is easily recognized as the primary source of digital convergence. The computer allows the user to connect to anyone, anywhere, at any time and is instantaneous. The computer also allows us to view streaming audio and video files with the simple click of a mouse. This connection to the world has greatly benefited children, teenagers and adults. It allows people to be at two or maybe three places at a time all while being centrally located at one destination.

Digital Convergence in work

Digital convergence has entered the workplace as well. Possibly the best example of the current state and future potential of convergence in the workplace is the cell phone. The cell phone has been in existence for decades and like a fine wine, it keeps getting better with age. Cell phones have the ability to be a handheld digital organizer, a navigational tool, a camera, and a computer all in one. With many other features, the cell phone is a key instrument for any businessman or woman. The cell phone can act like a walkie-talkie for fast contact, it can browse the internet and do research for your upcoming meeting, it can show you the best way to get to your meeting from where you are and it also can send emails to all the clients in your meeting letting them know you will be ten minutes late.

Just like convergence in the home, the computer is another huge component in the work environment. As many of us know, the computer allows us to be connected to anyone, anywhere, at anytime. At work, this allows us to hold a seminar at one point of contact and interact with other constituents in other places all around the world. This alone saves on traveling expenses, time away from work, and other meaningful duties. Just like the seminars, computers also are beneficial for people who are on vacation or maybe even at home sick.

Today's technology allows these individuals to be networked to their company's computers, and from anywhere in the world, they will be able to send and receive crucial information at a moment's notice.

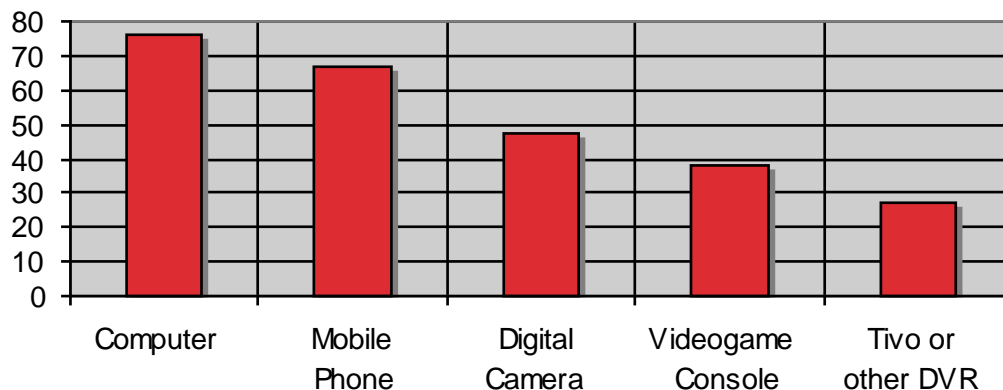
Digital Convergence Advantages

Digital Convergence has many advantages and is helping today's society like never before. As I mentioned in the above text, computers, cell phones, digital video recorders, videogame consoles, and many other digitally controlled devices have set new standards on how we live our lives and how we conduct business. Through digital convergence, the consumers as well as the suppliers are benefiting. Consumers benefit by receiving several technologies all in one device, and some suppliers benefit by supplying and creating the technology that makes it possible for consumers to buy.

Digital Convergence Disadvantages

Digital Convergence disadvantages are how we receive these large amounts of data over the cable system. "All this stuff is proven out and they know how to do it," says Michael W. Harris, president of the market researcher Kinetic Strategies Inc. The stopper remains cost. Because of the high price of cable modems, only 19,000 homes in North America are currently equipped with them. However, analysts estimate that cable systems that can support such technology now reach some 2 million homes. Another problem in the past was establishing industry wide standards for hardware and software. Now, industry execs say standards for broadband cable should already be in place. (Barret et al 43)

Table 1



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this report, I have found that there are many forms of digital convergence. Digital convergence at home includes the cell phone, computer, video game consoles, digital video recorders, and other digital devices. Digital convergence at work include the cell phone which is becoming one of the most important tools other than the computer, the computer, digital organizers, and many others. All of these forms of digital convergence have many advantages to the consumers and suppliers. Without this technology, humans would not be able to interact with others from extreme distances in a very short period of time. However with advantages, we can expect disadvantages as well. The supplier feels the effects of disadvantages more than the consumer by the cost of cable and making it available to all consumers rather than large groups. In conclusion, I have personally found these forms of digital convergence highly effective in school, at work, at home, and many other places.

Recommendation

Based upon the information provided through this report, I recommend using these forms of convergence throughout your lifetime and have a positive attitude towards future inventions. I use digital convergence everyday and it has helped tremendously as a graphic designer. I also recommend to everyone who are not educated in digital technology, take classes, read books, ask friends or anything to learn about this highly effective tool. Digital convergence is only going to increase, as we grow older. Why not start now by learning about our future and where it is going.

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