

Every semester we have students who respond to written assignments with unexpected curiosity, ingenuity, passion and eloquence. Since these are exactly the reactions we, as instructors, hope to provoke, such performances deserve better than a grade slapped at the bottom of the page along with some hastily written comments. We created the Hot Papers competition to recognize exemplary student papers more properly by offering students the momentary glory of public applause, the glamour of publication, and, yes, even a little bit of cash. We hope that, by publicizing excellent student writing, the Hot Papers competition will inspire even more passion and enthusiasm for academic writing across the Wayne State campus-and on any other campus that might be visited by this journal.

Jeff Howlett
Lisa Sandlin



Hot Papers 2002

The Best Academic Writing at Wayne State College

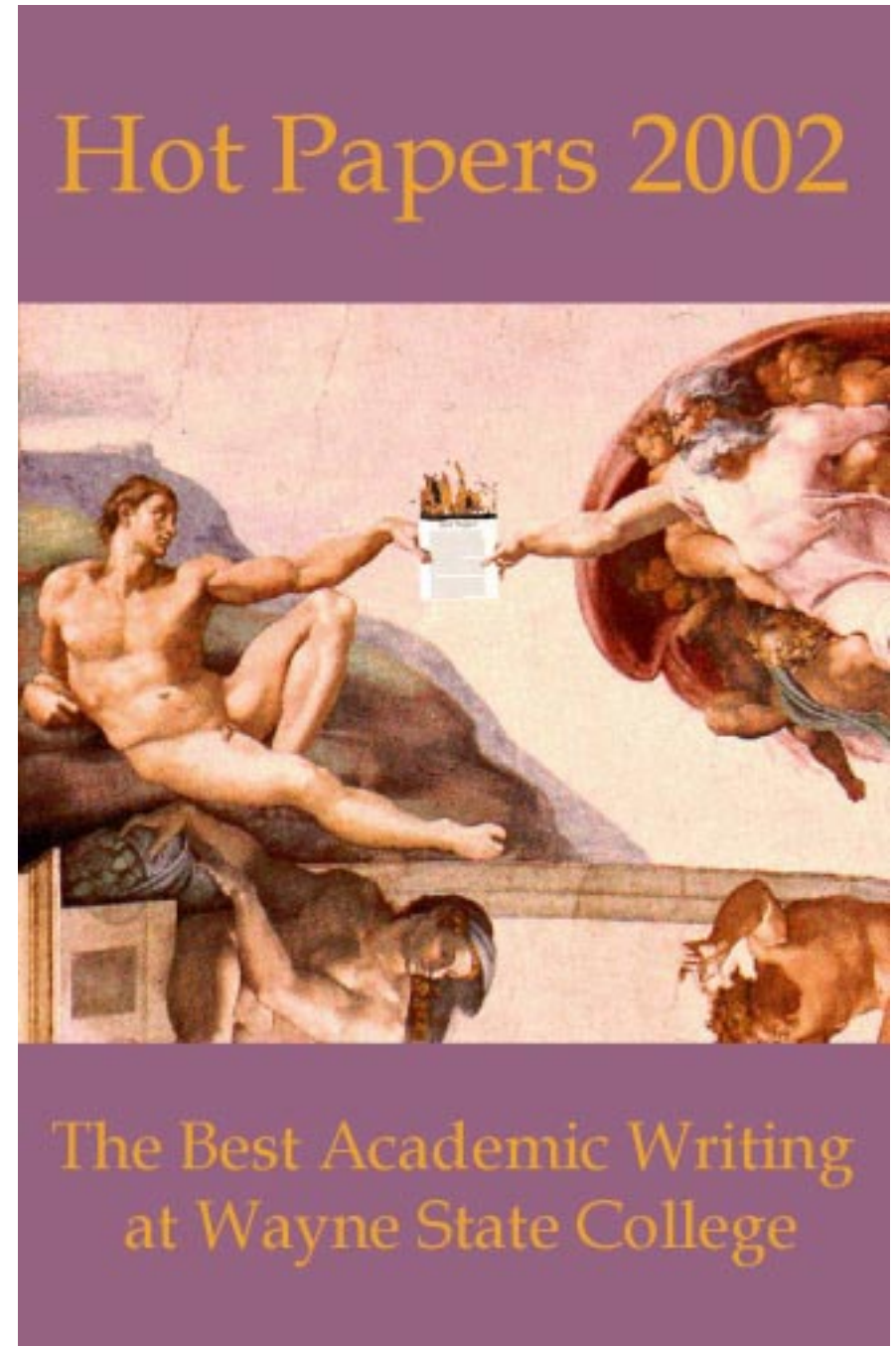


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Jeff Howlett and Lisa Sandlin
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Jezebel: A Character in Literature

Tina M. Schumacher

In the English language, the word jezebel has become synonymous with “a wicked or evil woman.” In the *American Heritage Dictionary*, “jezebel” is defined as: “A woman who is regarded as evil and scheming.” My question is, what is the origin of the relationship between evil and “jezebel”?

Jezebel started out as a character in *The Bible*. She first appears in the Old Testament Books of I and II Kings as a Tyrian princess who is married to King Ahab of Israel for the purpose of creating a political alliance between Tyre and Israel. Jezebel is a polytheist who is brought into Israel to live amongst monotheists, but she does not give up on her convictions when entering this new land. She asks King Ahab to erect a statue of Baal in Israel so that she can continue to worship her god. It was against religious laws to place a statue of a false god for worship in Israel and doing so incites the anger of the prophets of Yahweh, especially Elijah. Jezebel then arranges the murder of the prophets of Yahweh. Elijah becomes Jezebel’s greatest enemy and they are always at odds with one another.

In another episode of Jezebel’s life, King Ahab returns home, disappointed that he could not convince Naboth to sell to him his vineyard. Ahab pouts until Jezebel, acting as the mother of a spoiled child, devises a plan in which Naboth is accused of blasphemy and stoned to death. Due to the death of Naboth, Ahab has the legal right, as royalty, to take possession of Naboth’s vineyard. Therefore, he gets what he wants because of Jezebel’s scheming. Later Ahab repents, realizing the error of his ways, but Jezebel refuses to acknowledge any guilt in Naboth’s death. Elijah then prophesies that because of her wicked ways, Jezebel will die like Naboth, her blood will splatter the walls of Jezreel and dogs will eat her flesh.

Jezebel has been condemned, throughout history, for bringing about the fall of King Ahab and all of his family after him because of her wicked ways: Yahweh no longer smiled on Ahab because of her. King Ahab is killed in battle, but she survives another 14 years

under the rule of her son Joram. The prophet Elijah, being led by Yahweh, anoints Jehu the new King of Israel and Jehu then assassinates Joram so that he can rule. When Jezebel hears that Jehu is coming to Jezreel she paints her face and fixes her hair and then watches out her window waiting for Jehu to arrive. When he finally appears, she taunts him by asking if he has come in peace, after he has already murdered his master. Her boldness angers Jehu and he has her thrown from the window of her upper-story room. Her blood spatters the wall and the horses trample over her. When Jehu sends his servants to bury her body later, all that is left of her is her skull and the bones of her feet and hands. This fulfills Elijah’s prophecy that Jezebel’s blood would splatter the walls of Jezreel and dogs would eat her flesh.

My understanding is that Jezebel is evil because she worshipped a false god in Israel. She had Naboth murdered because she wanted his property. She orders that the prophets of Yahweh be killed and she makes an enemy of one of the greatest prophets, Elijah. She is ruthless in going after what she wants and she doesn’t stop until she gets it. She uses deception and manipulation in her quest for power. There are also a great many assumptions about Jezebel that have made their way through history and into the minds of the modern audience. Most of these are sexual connotations that swirl around our consciousness with the speaking of Jezebel’s name.

Jezebel’s character, and the archetype of the “evil woman” that encompasses her, has been taken out of the Bible and used in many different genres. You will find her in poetry, prose, drama and sermons. Knowing Jezebel’s story, the archetype of the “evil woman” is easy to see. Feminists are fighting a battle to improve Jezebel’s image, however; and Catherine Quick is on the frontlines. In her article, “Jezebel’s Last Laugh: The Rhetoric of Wicked Women”, she seeks to recover Jezebel’s image. According to Quick, “Judeo-Christian tradition judges only Satan more harshly as a symbol of evil. Jezebel’s association with patriarchal definitions of ‘bad women’ presents an opportunity for feminists, for if we recover the figure of Jezebel, we not only undermine patriarchal assumptions about the story, we undermine the very basic patriar-

chal assumptions about what characteristics and actions constitute bad women” (44). She argues that Jezebel’s feminine intelligence and creativity accomplished what a king could not and this strengthens Jezebel as a woman, but it does not make her “evil.” Therefore, if you look at Jezebel from another perspective, she could also be the archetype of the “strong woman.”

Music In the Old Bones: Jezebel Through the Ages, written by Janet Howe Gaines, contains a great deal of information on the subject of Jezebel in the Bible and in other forms of literature. In this essay I will discuss and comment on her research linking Jezebel to literature as well as my own. I will focus on Jezebel as the archetypes of the “evil woman” and the “strong woman” in each of three genres: poetry, prose and drama.

Gaines suggests that there are three types of poems that incorporate Jezebel and none of them has a kind word to say about her. The first type is that of “general condemnation” which includes general complaints against her character. The second type condemns Jezebel specifically because she is a seductress and even goes so far as to blame her for the fall of man. The third type condemns Jezebel because she offends the poet’s personal political or theological sensibilities (141). While I agree with Ms. Gaines that there are these three characterizations of Jezebel in poetry I would like to add one more. The fourth type is the “feminist perspective” that holds Jezebel up as an example of a strong woman who never gives up the fight no matter the circumstances.

The first example of poetry that I have chosen is from Gaines’ first category of “general condemnation.” “Song for the Clatter Bones,” written by Frederick Robert Higgins, is unique to other poems. Higgins accuses Jezebel, though she is not Jewish, of being a Jew, or like a Jew. The reason for this distinction is unknown (Gaines, 145). Higgins begins the poem as Jehu rides into Jezreel and is confronted by Jezebel. He makes a comparison to the fall of Lucifer from Heaven and also alludes to Jezebel’s powers to seduce men with dancing. The archetype of the “evil woman” is very evident in Higgins’ poem, and he condemns Jezebel for her actions and feels she got what she deserved.

“Song for the Clatter Bones”

GOD rest that Jewy woman,
Queen Jezebel, the bitch
Who peeled the clothes from her shoulder-bones
Down to her spent teats
As she stretched out of the window
Among the geraniums, where
She chaffed and laughed like one half daft
Titivating her painted hair-

King Jehu he drove to her,
She tipped him a fancy beck;
But he from his knacky side-car spoke
“Who’ll break that dewlapped neck?”
And so she was thrown from the window;
Like Lucifer she fell
Beneath the feet of the horses and they beat
The light out of Jezebel.

That corpse wasn’t planted in clover;
Ah, nothing of her was found
Save those grey bones that Hare-foot Mike
Gave me for their lovely sound;
And as once her dancing body
Made star-lit princes sweat
So I’ll just clack: though her ghost lacks back
There’s music in the old bones yet.

(OBMV 372)

In his poem, Higgins tells the story of Jezebel’s death and he enjoys the clatter of those old bones. While reading “Song for the Clatter Bones,” I can almost hear a drunken Irish brogue and I envision a trollish old man dancing around a fire rattling a bag of old bones and laughing hysterically, reveling in the death of the wicked wench, Jezebel. There is no concern that Jezebel was never given a proper burial. But we see a very different view in the

poem, "From Jezebel Her Progress," written by Gillian E. Hanscomb.

"From Jezebel Her Progress" is from the fourth category, "the feminists' perspective" and serves as counter point to Higgins' poem. Hanscomb lifts Jezebel up to heroine status, even perhaps a champion of women's causes, thus the archetype of the "strong woman" is clear. I see anger and sarcasm directed at men and organized religion ordained by men. She sets Jezebel up in the first of four parts as a victim of a male dominated world. By the fourth part to the poem, a turn is made and we again see a reference to Jezebel's connection to evil. Like Higgins, Hanscomb makes a relationship to Lucifer when she pits Jezebel against Jesus as dark against light and the poem becomes very disturbing. Hanscomb's poem ends with a longing and a sorrow for Jezebel, maybe all the Jezebels of the world that are left to pay for the mistakes of man.

"From Jezebel Her Progress"

1
Men made myths
and their mnemonic,
morality.
After that,
they passed judgments.

Therefore,
Jezebel is a seducer
to fornication and sacrilege.

Good, I thought, if
behind every man's fall
is a powerful woman.

I take you gladly, Jezebel;
the lift of your breasts, the
slide of your belly to thigh,
the rose of your chivalry.

But we must tell the daughters our intentions.

.....

4
Jesus and Jezebel
out of God's side or womb;
the one to glory gone
and then a tomb;

the other headed for a fall
and then a curse, without a hearse,
without a burial.

Jesus and Jezebel
heaven and hell
(light and dark

life and death

darlings of a modern yin and yang)

leapt separately into the world.
Or so I'm told.

I'm not fooled.
Jezebel, my Jezebel, came first,
head first:
the seed of God still hot within her.

Jezebel
oh Jezebel.

(Linthwaite 112. 1,4)

As you can see both of these poems are dark and bitter, but in the first example, Jezebel is condemned--she got what she de-

served. In the second example the bitterness is directed toward men while there is an expression of sorrow for Jezebel's condemnation and the poet seeks to revive her. The feminists see Jezebel as a woman who took the blame for the errors of man, and as happens in oral storytelling, the story grows through time. Jezebel, though not responsible for the fall *of* man, took the fall *for* man.

Hanscomb makes a connection between Jezebel and sexuality in her poem, as does Higgins. Hanscomb makes a specific reference to the fact that Jezebel is a woman with this line in her poem "...the lift of your breasts, the slide of your belly to thigh..." Higgins refers to Jezebel's dancing and making "star-lit princes sweat". Biblically, however, no reference is made to Jezebel's beauty or even her sexuality. She is portrayed in other works of literature as a powerful female with beauty and sexuality that make her a seductress, which is also wrapped up in the archetype of the "evil woman". Feminist Catherine Quick points out one example of this in Frank G. Slaughter's 1961 novel, *The Curse of Jezebel: A novel of the Biblical Queen of Evil*:

The author, in a note at the end of the novel, claims accuracy in presenting an account of the happenings in Kings. But in the novel, Jezebel is portrayed as a beautiful seductress, who uses her beauty to manipulate even the most faithful men into following her will, even Michael, the hero of the novel and a loyal servant of Yahweh (WL 16: 46).

Quick is telling us that Slaughter's account of Jezebel is not Biblically accurate because she is portrayed as a seductress.

Throughout the novel, Jezebel seduces and dominates men by using the power of a rare plant called the "Flower of Dreams" (Slaughter 122). Quite typically, she is cast as a woman using sex to gain power and as such she is seen negatively. Janet Howe Gaines does not mince words when she comments on Frank G. Slaughter's adaptation of the Jezebel story. She says: "The chauvinistic theme established by Slaughter, is that a woman's only sources of power are beauty and sorcery" (112).

The theme of the evil or "power-hungry woman" is used throughout literature. Shakespeare has a Jezebel in the character of

Lady MacBeth. She too is an evil woman hungry for power. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Eve can be considered a "Jezebel." Historically Eve came first, but how much do we really know about her? Milton knew that it is because of her that man fell from paradise. So she is a seductress, a temptress, a "Jezebel". Cleopatra is another well-known example of a seductress. Even The Wife of Bath, in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, has "Jezebel-like" qualities. She likes sex and is not afraid to admit it. She is also a powerful woman, who owns her own business and wants to be in control. The actual number of references to Jezebel is unknowable. Authors use the theme of the seductress over and over again, just changing the names and the circumstances. This has always made an interesting story so why would anyone mess with success?

Not all novelists use Jezebel's evil image; some even try to lift her up, though they seem to change the Biblical story considerably to do so. *Jezebel: A Romance in the Days When Ahab was King of Israel*, written by Lafayette McLaws, is just one example of a novel in which Jezebel is given a more positive image. This story is told from the first person point of view of Jezebel's loyal servant, an Egyptian dwarf. He sees her as kind and beautiful, devoted to her family and most of the time a wise ruler (Gaines 132). The twist to this story is that in the end Jezebel sees the error of her ways, turns away from Baal and accepts the one true God of Israel. McLaws takes the liberty of borrowing the Jezebel story from the Bible, adding characters from other books of the Bible and then creating an ending completely different from the Book of Kings. He is one of the few, who have written Jezebel positively. But as you will note, the ending is changed, and therefore so is Jezebel.

Novelists are not the only artists who take creative license with the Jezebel story. The story has universal appeal and numerous plays have been written based on the stories of Jezebel from I and II Kings. Robert Gilbert Welsh wrote a one-act play simply titled, *Jezebel*. In this play, Jezebel is painted in a very harsh light. According to Gaines, flowers die when brought into her presence, she schemes throughout to seduce men in an effort to gain power, and her sexual escapades are condemned throughout the play. She

possesses no redeeming qualities whatsoever and she is very much the archetypical evil woman. When Jehu returns to claim the throne he compares Jezebel to “a predatory she-wolf” (171). In Welsh’s play, as in other literature, Jezebel’s sexuality becomes an important theme. You may find interesting, as I have, that Jezebel seems to be treated more harshly by the men who use her or her story as a subject.

Written by a woman, the following example of a one-act play treats the Biblical Queen with more respect. Dorothy Stockbridge titled her one-act play *Jezebel* also, and it is based loosely on the story in II Kings when Jehu rides victorious into the city. The play opens with Jezebel in her room with her servant girl who is also Joram’s concubine. They have a long discussion about Joram riding off to battle and each telling the other how much they love and care for him. When a messenger interrupts to tell Jezebel that Jehu has captured Joram and that they are coming to the city, she begins to make herself up and to don her crown. Jezebel is unaware that her son is dead and once again being cast as a seductress, but this time, *also as a loving mother*, she sets out to win the heart of Jehu, with the purpose being to save her son. When speaking of Jehu, Jezebel says: “I will bring love back into his heart. I will make it a flame to devour him and when he shall lie half fainting at my feet he will give me again the life of my son. Aye, in the teeth of thy prophets, O thou God of Israel, I will have back the life of my son” (Shay 561). Here she is painted positively because we see in her a strong desire that her son not perish and she is willing to do anything to save his life, even to sleep with the enemy. In other words, *she is doing what she thinks she has to do* and so here we see her in the archetypical role of the “strong woman.”

There are other twists in this story as well. The servant girl is revealed in the end to be Naboth’s daughter and she is working with Jehu because she wants revenge on Jezebel for her father’s death. Everything seems stacked against Jezebel, but in the end she is not pushed from the window; Jehu will not do the deed himself and the guards are reluctant to do so because they respect her as their Queen. As a credit to Jezebel being a “strong woman”, in control even to the end, she ends her own life by jumping from the

window and committing suicide. In doing so she gains the sympathy and respect of the audience. Further adding to the melancholy felt after the death of the Queen are Jehu’s final words: “So passeth Israel’s beauty. She was betrayed of her gods, who gave her pride and moulded her in woman’s form. Let her lie where she hath fallen, lest the prophecy go unfulfilled. Lord God, now am I King of Israel as thou hast ordained” (Shay 569). With Jehu’s final words, the audience is left feeling that Jezebel lived a difficult and twisted life, caught up between gods of different nations, and in the end got the shaft. Jehu does what he feels he must to carry on the will of the God of Israel, but he seems to do so with a heavy heart. Both Welsh and Stockbridge take creative license with the Biblical Jezebel story by adding extra characters and changing events, but Stockbridge, a woman, writes her story with more respect for Jezebel.

Those who want to change Jezebel’s image from “evil” to anything more positive have to work harder in their story telling. Leland Ryken, an authority on *The Bible* as a literary work, tells us that the character of Jezebel in *The Bible* is drawn to align the audience against her. “...the writer portrays Jezebel in such a way as to arouse our revulsion. She emerges as ruthless, domineering, cruel, and dishonest” (46). If you know the Biblical story of Jezebel it is plain to see that she was a woman who, to put it lightly, *was not very nice*. Throughout all of these readings on Jezebel, the archetype of the “evil woman” is obvious in the negative adaptations of her character. The archetype of the “strong woman” in the Biblical Jezebel is not as evident and you have to look harder to find it.

Because of the stigma that the name “Jezebel” carries with it, seeing her positively can be difficult. If we consider Jezebel an outsider, however, she becomes more sympathetic. Jezebel’s story is classic. As an outsider, she is not only from another country (Tyre), but she is a *woman* operating in a *man’s* world. Jezebel seems to be very comfortable with power, but in Israel, women desiring power are not looked upon kindly. She is left to fight her own battles and her pride keeps her from giving up or giving in to anyone. If she wants something she goes after it and her husband,

King Ahab, does not stop her. In fact he even builds a temple and joins her in worshipping Baal. (Ahab comes across as a weak man, but that is an entirely different essay.) She makes an enemy of Elijah the Prophet, which was probably her biggest mistake and is the beginning of her undoing. Even when she was facing death she did not cower in fear. She was strong enough to stand up and face fate head-on.

I believe that myth is a large part of the “Jezebel” image of today. Stories are handed down from one generation to the next and they grow and change. According to *The Bible*: “*Ahab...did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He...married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab...did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him*” (I Kings 16. 30-33, italics mine). Also in I Kings 21: 25 it is said: “There was never a man like *Ahab*, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife.” It seems that Ahab was committing quite a bit of evil himself, especially toward the Lord, but in the literary adaptations of the story, Jezebel is getting all of the blame. Considering the politics of the time, and Jezebel being a woman, I cannot be sure of the power that she possessed in controlling anything. This is where the feminists approach to her story gains credibility. Ahab was making a lot of trouble for himself, but Jezebel is getting the blame for taking him and all the future generations of his family out of sovereignty and to their deaths.

As I stated earlier, *The Bible* does not mention Jezebel’s beauty or sexuality; all of these images are of our own creation. Today, when we think of Jezebel we think of seduction, and blatant sexuality. These images, as well as a “Jezebel” being a woman who deceives, schemes and is wicked are etched into our consciousness. Her story would most likely not be interesting enough for the modern reader without all of the evils that are now synonymous with her name.

In an effort to be fair to the Biblical Queen, some writers, especially feminists, view her more as the archetypical “strong

woman” who, despite the odds, holds everything together. The feminists have a battle ahead in their effort to change the image of Jezebel that has been so strongly fixed in our minds. The positive portrayals do paint her in a more positive light, but they do not follow the Biblical story with precision. But then, the negative portrayals do not follow the Biblical story to the letter either. My research leads me to the conclusion that our literary depictions of Jezebel are not always fair to her Biblical character, but they certainly do make an interesting story. We see Jezebel most often as the archetype of the “evil woman”. I cannot help but wonder, where literature would be without the “evil woman” who spends her days cunningly manipulating other characters, weaving a web of deceit and betrayal along the way? Whether you see Jezebel as evil or strong, or possibly both, as an audience of literature, we have Jezebel to thank for many interesting plot lines that have been drawn out of her Biblical story.

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Safety In Acronyms: The USG Model

Chris Begeman

I awoke in my new bed. This bed was the United States of Government’s (USG) prototype and was different from any bed in which I had ever slept. It had tags instructing proper sleep positions to attain the Ideal Rest Quotient (IRQ). The Surgeon General’s Office (SGO) derived the IRQ from years of testing conducted by the Federal Task Force on Sleeping Habits (FTFSH). The FTFSH is an auxiliary of the SGO and has been greatly lauded by both the SGO and the USG. Every night, I tried to follow the instructions of the FTFSH, but I frequently failed to meet the IRQ because the FTFSH designed the bed for a body three inches shorter and twenty pounds heavier than mine. Those are the dimensions of the average USG male and beds are produced in accordance with the FTFSH regulations.

I arose at 5:00 a.m. because the Assessment of Rest and Sleep Experiments (ARSE) conducted by the SGO of the USG declared, “Early to bed and early to rise, makes our national healthy, wealthy and wise.” Upon this declaration, Congress passed legislation which required Outdoor-Illuminating Nocturnal Contraptions (OINC) to be extinguished at 9:15 p.m. Any citizen found outside of his or her own Individual Domestic Domicile (IDD) after this time is to be jailed immediately by the local division of the National Association of Law Enforcers (NALE). NALE has come to my assistance many times; I’m grateful for such an organization. At 5:00 every morning, sirens sound warning us to wake up and at precisely 5:05 a.m. local time, telephone calls are blanketed to every IDD. Weekends are no exception as the FTFSH has concluded changing sleep habits or patterns lowers our collective IRQ.

After stretching to minimize the sleep-induced muscle cramps, I sat next to my shower because the Morning Awakening Act (MAA) declared that USG citizens are more alert during their daily activities if they wait ten minutes between waking and showering. The MAA also ordered USG citizens to wait until arriving at their daily destinations to consume their morning ration of one Fully Optimal Organic Diet (FOOD) pill. At exactly 5:15 a.m., water

began to flow in my shower when the Public Water Commission (PWC) released water to my IDD. After my five minute, lukewarm shower (“Long, hot showers relax USG citizens and cause them to be unproductive,” National Citizenship Program [NCP]), I dressed in my white shirt and black pants according to the recommendation of the Association for the Deficient in Discernment of Color (ADDC).

As I climbed into my personal automated transport (PAT), the radio self-tuned to USRadio. Fortunately for we citizens of the USG, the Auditory Auxiliary (AA) of the Assessors of Productivity and Entertainment (APE) had determined what type of sound most benefits listeners at various times during the day. The APE had conducted Sound: Optimal Noise Generation (SONG) studies to ascertain what sounds should fill USG citizens’ days. The SONG sounds played in our PATs, our IDDs, our buildings and our public areas.

During my commute, I had to stop at the National Automobile Repair Center (NARC) for my PAT’s weekly assessment of pollutive emissions (PE), acceleration and velocity regulators (AVR), automatic personal restraint system (APRS), passenger ergonomic settings (PES) and my multilateral assessor of position (MAP). My PAT was also due for its monthly refueling by the National Gasoline Provider (NGP). The NARC and NGP both fall under the regulations of the Federal Organization of Transportation (FOOT). The MAP in my PAT was a FOOT requirement and greatly aided personal transportation. In order to reduce driving time and fuel consumption, a national network of satellites had been developed by the FOOT to relay messages to the MAPs in our PATs. The MAPs processed the data and relayed the transportationally ideal road and episode selection (TIRES) to the PAT. The TIRES took into consideration road conditions, accidents and optimum fuel efficiency as determined by the State Traffic Assessors and Laborers (STAL)--the local FOOT branch. STAL workers are of some of the most dedicated employees of the USG. FOOT mandates that all PATs must be equipped with MAPs. (My MAP fails only two times per week and I usually end up fewer than twenty miles from my anticipated destination.)

After an uplifting PAT ride devoid of decision making (one of my strong points as determined by the Federal Intelligence Test of Education [FITE]), I entered the office of the International Science Monitoring Society (ISMS). Amazingly, the entire ISMS staff has scored in the top 1% on the FITE in the science and math section. The ISMS is a publicly funded and watched think-tank whose purpose is to observe the scientific improvements of foreign governments and comparatively relate their progress to that of the USG. Currently, my work has focused on studying hand-held mathematical calculating devices of the USG and China. I must then determine if we are more or less advanced than China and report my findings to the ISMS Board of Governors (BOG) according to Language, Arts and Mathematical Evaluators (LAME) standards. I have only been researching these instruments for three months and much of my data is inconclusive. I hope to some day be published in the Scientific Technology Update Publication-International Division (STUPID)! Having a report published in a STUPID Publication would guarantee me national recognition.

That dream is far off. A year ago, one of my coworkers was promoted from Field Appropriate Research (FAR) to Mechanical Assessment (MA) for his creative thinking in the area of refrigeration. After years of FAR, he proposed we reestablish personal refrigeration units (PRU) in IDDs. His proposal-a mighty five pages-was initially turned down by the USG because it could undermine the Delivery of Urban Meals (DUM) nutritional provision and subsequently alter the statistics of the Health of Everyone Research Organization (HERO). After reconsideration, his proposal was approved and now the USG uses the DUM to distribute the FOOD pills and small amounts of nutritionally free flavor enhancers that must be refrigerated. All USG citizens savor his success.

After a fulfilling day of work, I stopped at the DUM distribution center between the ISMS head quarters and my IDD. The introduction of the FOOD pills has made our nutritional consumption extremely convenient as we can consume our FOOD pills with hydrogenated tampered-organic Oxygen (H-TO-O). How simple: we survive on FOOD and H-TO-O! Of course, the FOOD pills and

H-TO-O must be carefully rationed and distributed by DUM in accordance with the approved Subsistence and Nutritional Oversight Technique (SNOT) to protect against over-consumption and ensure the USG citizens stay as healthy and productive as possible. I am friends with one DUM worker and sometimes he allows me more FOOD and H-TO-O than the SNOT recommends. I think the SNOT mandates are a bit scant; otherwise, I would never break a USG recommendation.

On my way to my IDD, I picked up a copy of United States Informative News (USIN)-paper edition. I was appalled at the front page story: Two teenagers had attempted to engage in non-Reproductive and Procreative Enaction Department (RAPED) sanctioned intimate behavior. I don't understand how someone could desire to break such a basic part of our local Code of Essential and Proper Activities (CEPA). RAPED activities are closely monitored by various organizations-including the NALE. Only those with extremely high FITE scores are allowed to engage in such conduct. It seems every week the USIN is reporting CEPA violations-especially those in the RAPED area.

Upon arriving at my IDD, I relaxed in my Federal Agency for the Improvement of Life (FAIL)-approved chair and listened to hours of USRadio. I heard USIN newscasters telling horror stories of other countries' ills: Russians and others in the former USSR were living in boxes in sub-zero temperatures because they turned from government protection and provision to a free world. Conditions are so horrible, the Diplomacy-Import Export (DIE) branch of the Internal Department of International Organization and Tariffs (IDIOT) declared travel unsafe to any areas outside of USG jurisdiction. The IDIOT also reported that FAIL standards are not met in any location other than the USG.

I'm glad I'm protected in the USG!

Appendix - Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Auditory Auxiliary
ADDC	Association of Deficient in Discernment of Colors

APE	Assessors of Productivity and Entertainment
APRS	Automotive Personal Restraint System
ARSE	Assessment of Rest and Sleep Experiments
AVR	Acceleration and Velocity Regulators
BOG	Board of Governors
CEPA	Code of Essential and Proper Activities
DIE	Diplomacy-Import Export
DUM	Delivery of Urban Meals
FAIL	Federal Agency for the Improvement of Life
FAR	Field Appropriate Research
FITE	Federal Intelligence Test of Education
FOOD	Fully Optimal Organic Diet
FOOT	Federal Organization of Transportation
FTFSH	Federal Task Force on Sleeping Habits
IDD	Individual Domestic Domicile
IDIOT	Internal Department of International Organization and Tariffs
ISMS	International Science Monitoring Society
IRQ	Ideal Rest Quotient
HERO	Health of Everyone Research Organization
H-TO-O	Hydrogenated Tampered-Organic Oxygen
LAME	Language, Arts and Mathematical Evaluators
MA	Mechanical Assessment
MAA	Morning Awakening Act
MAP	Multilateral Assessor of Position
NALE	National Association of Law Enforcers
NARC	National Automobile Repair Center
NCP	National Citizenship Program
NGP	National Gasoline Provider
OINC	Outdoor-Illuminating Nocturnal Contraptions
PAT	Personal Automated Transport
PE	Pollutive Emissions
PES	Passenger Ergonomic Settings
PWC	Public Water Commission
RAPED	Reproductive and Procreative Enaction Department
SONG	Sound: Optimal Noise Generation
SGO	Surgeon General's Office

SNOT	Subsistence and Nutritional Oversight Technique
STAL	State Traffic Assessors and Laborers
STUPID	Scientific Technology Update Publication-International Division
TIRES	Transportationally Ideal Road and Episode Selection
USG	United States of Government
USIN	United States Informative News

Sylvia Plath's Final Work: *Ariel* Evolving
Gabriela Easterday

On a desk in a room at 23 Fitzroy Road, the flat in which William Butler Yeats had lived and in which Sylvia Plath had now died, lay a finished manuscript, *Ariel and Other Poems*. (Alexander 331)

The stack of paper Sylvia Plath left, sitting typed and neatly arranged on a desk in her London flat, has its own story. Poetry, death, and domestic images, like balloons and babies, daddies and beekeeping, are intermingled within its pages. Most biographers agree that the manuscript left by Plath, later known as the *Ariel* poems, was written between the hours of four and eight o'clock a.m. before her children awakened. However, many speculations are made concerning other details. Some say Plath sipped brandy as she wrote. Others say Beethoven kept her company through the morning hours.

A few things are more certain. A dead father and the betrayal of a husband fueled the genius that put together the powerful words upon the typed pages. These are the pages encompassing the final months of Sylvia Plath's life. In many ways, they tell her story. Yet the manuscript is incomplete, its creator dying intestate, leaving her widower husband free to manipulate and rearrange its contents.

Thus, the manuscript has faced its own journey. Plath brought it to life, jabbing her pen into pages that would be thrown away, lines that would be crossed out, reworded, and rewritten—pages, full of word and image, there even to absorb one or two of its creator's tears. Her manuscript would fall into the hands of the widowed Ted Hughes who would omit, cut, and rearrange her original format—taking his final product and selling it to the highest bidder. Now Plath's original *Ariel* pages sit in Smith College's Rare Book Room, but its offspring sits in my bookshelf and yours, where Sylvia Plath still has the potential to inspire a feminist or anger a Jew. She still has the power to influence, to share her expression. The manuscript she left sitting neatly on her desk on Fitzroy Road makes it possible.

The creation, diffusion, and reception of the *Ariel* poems are a very unique account. Plath wrote these poems within the last six months of her life. Most consider the poems confessional, or at least spurred by biographical occurrences. Plath had no will; therefore, Hughes had all rights to her work. His method of diffusing her final poems has been widely scrutinized, especially by those who hold him accountable for her suicide. Before her death, in a letter to her mother, Plath commented that the *Ariel* poems would make her name. She could not have been more correct. Since the publication of *Ariel*, hundreds of books have been written concerning Plath, including criticism of her poetry as well as numerous biographies. The *Ariel* manuscript has truly made a tremendous impact upon American literature.

On October 27, 1932, Sylvia Plath was born to Otto and Aurelia Plath. Sylvia Plath and her family, including a younger brother, Warren, lived in a house near the ocean in Winthrop, Massachusetts. Otto Plath, a man who “exerted unquestioned dominance over the household,” was a professor at Boston University (Kehoe). He was a published doctor and author of *Bumblebees and Their Ways*. Nine days after Sylvia Plath’s eighth birthday, Otto died of an embolism that struck his lung. Apparently, Otto had been sick for quite some time. He suffered from diabetes mellitus and had gotten a sore toe that he refused to see a doctor about. The infection spread, his leg was amputated, and he died one month later (Stevenson 10).

Even as a child, Plath showed signs of the dramatic and extraordinary woman she would become. After the death of her father Sylvia announced to her mother that she would “never speak to God again” (Stevenson 10). Later, Sylvia wrote on a piece of paper, “I promise to never marry again,” and insisted that her mother sign it (11).

Seemingly, Plath recovered quickly from her grief. She excelled in school and had her first poem published shortly after the death of her father. Her family relocated to Wellesley, Massachusetts, where Plath continued to show a gift for art and writing. By the time she was a senior in high school, she had published a short story in *Seventeen* and a poem in *The Christian Science Monitor*

(Kehoe). However, no matter her success, Plath developed an eerie self-consciousness and perfectionism that she would carry with her into her brief adult life.

The recently published journals of Plath are indicative of an abundance of insecurity. Page after page describes her desire to succeed and be noticed and loved. So much attention within her writing is paid toward men—those who gave her the affection she so desperately desired and those that did not. Of course, the argument could be made that most young American women experience a period shrouded in self-consciousness. However, several of Plath’s biographers have made the connection between this aspect of her behavior and the early death of her father—perhaps her attempt to succeed despite all boundaries and to take extreme measures in pleasing someone so far and physically removed from her. One might also make the argument that Plath’s perfectionism stemmed from a desire for order in the chaotic world that stole her father.

After graduating from high school, Plath attended the prestigious women’s institution, Smith College. She wanted all As and to graduate summa cum laude. She was successful. Her writing achievement also continued as she won numerous poetry and short story contests. For example, while at Smith, Plath entered the Ethel Olin Corbin and Elizabeth Babcock contests. All poetry was submitted under anonymous names, and the English professors were given the responsibility of choosing the first and second place poems. After they selected, they realized that for the first time in Smith history, one person, Sylvia Plath, had been given the first and second place honor (Butscher 95).

However, amidst all of Plath’s success, there was an obvious dark side to her life. Cyrilly Abels, known in *The Bell Jar* as “Jay Cee,” managing editor of *Mademoiselle*, recounts her experiences with Plath: “I never found anyone so unspontaneous so consistently, especially in one so young. She was simply all façade, too polite, too well-brought-up and well-disciplined” (qtd. in Butscher 104).

Indeed, in 1953, after her guest editorship with *Mademoiselle*, Plath’s use of “façade” became obvious when the successful, beautiful, and bright young woman went home and told her mother,

“I want to die--let’s die together” (qtd. in Kehoe). On August 24th of the same year, after receiving electroshock therapy to cure her depression, Plath crept into the crawl space below her house with a bottle of sleeping pills and was found several days later. Her suicide attempt had failed. She would spend the next several months in the psychiatric wing at Massachusetts General Hospital receiving more electroshock therapy, as well as insulin treatments. While at the hospital, her therapist, Dr. Jones, would reveal something to Sylvia that would play a major role in her creation of *Ariel*: she was suffering from an Electra Complex (Butscher 122-125).

Once again, Plath seemingly brushed her grief and depression aside and returned to Smith-all-American, “fully recovered,” and successful. She managed to land a Fulbright scholarship that enabled her to attend Cambridge University in London. It was there that she would meet the tall and handsome Ted Hughes--the beginning of her end.

Plath met Hughes on February 25, 1956 (Kehoe). She had heard of Hughes long before their first encounter. In fact, Plath could recite Hughes’ poetry verbatim. They married four months after meeting, sharing apartments in both the United States and England. While Hughes was becoming an accomplished poet and writer of children’s books--giving lectures and receiving literary awards--Plath was being domestic and bearing two children, Frieda and Nicholas. That is not to say that she did not find time to write. She published *The Colossus* and received favorable reviews (Kehoe). However, domesticity was weighing heavily upon her. In a 1961 interview on the BBC, Plath appeared with Hughes and called herself a “housewife” (Butscher 269) -- not a poet, not an aspiring young, beautiful and creative woman, but a housewife. Had she given up already?

Plath sacrificed a great deal for Hughes. The woman who struggled to find time to write poetry, something Hughes could devote his life to, was also in charge of the children, the cleaning, the cooking, the nurturing, and the editing of Hughes’ work. She was very foully repaid in 1962 when she discovered that her husband was having an affair. Of course there are those who demand that Plath deserved what she got: she was always depressed, she

was always needy, she was always jealous, her childish acts of rage had pushed him away. Dido Merwin, originally Frieda’s god-mother, has this to say of Ted’s affair:

Almost anyone could be brainwashed into becoming an adulterer and a liar if you went on long enough implying that that was what they were. . . sooner or later, however much they loved you, they would either get the hell out to avoid your accusations, or console themselves for the sake of their sanity and lie about it for the sake of peace. (qtd. in Stevenson 343)

The fact still remains, Hughes used Plath up and then betrayed her--regardless of her emotional stability. On February 11, 1963, Plath gave up on frilly concepts like family, love, and marriage. Plath gave up on living. Early on the morning of the 11th, she took all of the necessary precautions to ensure her children’s safety and then laid her head upon a towel in the gas oven of her Yeatsian apartment. Plath did not give up on everything that morning. She left an organized manuscript, not a huddled jumble of papers--what one might expect from a person so without hope or cause that she would take her own life. The stack of paper was ready. It was a culmination of her pain and expression--an insight into what was going on in her head that morning and the mornings of the six months before that. The orderly manuscript sat there so unlike its chaotic surroundings, as if to say *this is why*.

The manuscript can serve to answer many questions posed by Plath’s suicide, especially considering that the same events that triggered her desire for death are the same as those she wrote about. Approximately three years before Plath would sit down to write the first poem of the *Ariel* manuscript, she befriended a young poetess much like herself named Anne Sexton. Like Plath, Sexton was no stranger to suicidal thoughts. They sat and discussed their previous attempts at death while frequenting their favorite bar. Most important to their conversation was their discussion of “confessionalism” as a poetic genre (Butscher 242). The *Ariel* poems are undoubtedly autobiographical responses to actual events and people, thus confessional. For example, “Berck-Plage,” like

many of Plath's poems, is riddled with hard-to-decipher images: "a green pool opens its eye . . . Tubular steel wheelchairs, aluminum crutches . . . Beyond the breakwater, spotty with barnacles" (Plath *Ariel* 23). Plath's July 2nd, 1962 journal entry reads, "Percy Key is dead . . . and was buried Friday, June 29th, at 2:30 . . . I have written a long poem "Berck-Plage" about it. Very moved. Several terrible glimpses" (Plath, *The Journals* 671).

Of course, most poets write about experiences in their own lives, but Plath's poetry is considered confessional because each poem of the *Ariel* manuscript delves into the contours of her mind—all can be attributed to feelings about an event or person in Plath's life. She confesses her psychology and in a riddled manner tells us, *this is how I feel about my mother, husband, father, children; this is what they do to me.*

The earliest poem in the *Ariel* manuscript is "You're," which is a poem written during her 1960 pregnancy with her daughter Frieda (Butscher 328). The poem's mood, by Plathian standards, is relatively positive. Other early poems include "Tulips" and "Morning Song," which were written in 1961. "The Moon and the Yew Tree," "The Rival," and "Berck-Plage" were written somewhere between March and the summer of 1962. However, the majority of the *Ariel* poems were written between October and November, with the exception of "Munich Mannequins," "Totem," and "Paralytic," which were written the January before her death; "Balloons," "Contusion," "Kindness," "Words," and "Edge," were written in the last week of her life (Aird 70).

In her later poems, Plath gains strength and becomes closer to the death with which she seems to be so obsessed. Poetry written toward the middle of the process is definitely calculated and well written but nonetheless chaotic. Perhaps Plath's most popular poems, "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus," are indicative of such a trend. They are wrathful, vengeful, angry pieces that convey a strong sense of victimage. In order to really understand Plath's thematic growth, one would have to read "Lady Lazarus" followed by a poem written in her last week of life, like "Edge." In "Lady Lazarus," Plath creates a personal freak show in which death is some sort of conquest or prize—a huge drama that must be acted out

as the victim conquers death and man and society. "Edge," a much shorter poem, does not need the drama; it is simply victorious: "The woman is perfected. / Her dead / Body wears the smile of accomplishment" (Plath, *Ariel* 80). The final five poems written by Plath all have a certain amount of placidity to them—death is no longer drama but reality.

Why was Plath so obsessed with death and dying? We know that at twenty she tried to end her life with a bottle of sleeping pills. We also know that so much of her poetry dealt with victimage—holocaust images like Jews, gas ovens and chuffing engines. What force motivated her creativity in such a direction, to make death and victim its central components? Disregarding all theories about possible mental illness, the answer is simple: "All my life I have been 'stood up' emotionally by the people I loved most" (Plath, *The Journals* 455). Indeed, no discussion of Plath's creation is complete without examining the influence of her abandoning father and betraying husband.

Of course Sylvia's father did not intend to die on November 5, 1940, leaving his eight-year-old daughter permanently scarred. However, like many biographers, Edward Butscher argues that Otto, more than any other factor in Plath's life, was her driving force: "for Sylvia Plath, as even the most casual reading of her poetry demonstrates, the central obsession from the beginning to the end of her life and career was her father, Professor Otto Emile Plath" (3).

Plath's use of World War II victim / aggressor images, like those found in "Daddy"—"Jew," "Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen," "gypsy ancestress," "Panzer-man," "Fascist"—can be directly linked to her father. Otto Plath emigrated from Grabow, Prussia, in what is called the "polish-corridor" (Stevenson 4). At the time of his death, Nazi Germany was on the rise. Plath and her family would sit in the family room and listen to news about the war while Aurelia, Plath's mother, would comment that she was glad Otto had not lived to see his homeland torn apart, once again, by war (Butscher 18). Naturally, Plath ingested news of the atrocities committed against Jews and gypsies while grieving for the father who somehow had his foot, so to speak, in war-torn Europe. She

was mad at her father for abandoning her, blamed him even, and her response was to make herself into the Jewish victim and her father into the Nazi aggressor.

Plath's use of these tactics is most apparent in the poems "Lady Lazarus" and "Daddy." "Lady Lazarus" is indicative of Plath's suicidal urges. However, in a nursery-rhyme tone, the victim exposes herself, and the World War II victim / aggressor images are put into use. Her skin is "Bright as a Nazi lampshade" and her face "a featureless, fine / Jew linen" (Plath, *Ariel* 8). The poem appears to be directed at the "Herr Docktor," "Herr Enemy," "Herr God," and "Herr Lucifer" of the poem; Herr being the German equivalent of mister (Plath, *Ariel* 10-11). It would be enough to merely say God or Lucifer, both being images generally regarded as male. However, Plath wants to stress the male-ness of these men by saying *Mr. God* and *Mr. Lucifer*; she also adds to the Nazi / father image by using the German word for mister.

Plath does nothing to disguise the biographical motivation for her poem "Daddy." The title says it all. Otto is clearly the fascist / bastard / brute of the poem, guilty of victimizing and abusing the gypsy / Jewish / Sylvia Plath. "Daddy" is completely full of biographical elements: "Daddy" has a "grey toe," like the infected toe that spurred Otto's death; he comes from "the Polish town" and stands at a professor's "blackboard" (Plath, *Ariel* 48-50). Plath is obviously enraged with her father for abandoning her. She speaks of her previous attempts at death as a ploy to "get back, back, back to [Daddy]" (50). She concludes her poem with "daddy, you bastard, I'm through." "Through," of course, is indicative of Plath's plan to end her life.

Five poems referred to as the "the bee-sequence," including "The Bee Meeting," "The Arrival of the Bee Box," "Stings," "The Swarm," and "Wintering," can also be directly linked back to Otto Plath. Before his death, Otto was a bee expert and even authored a book devoted solely to the study of bees. Before her death, Plath began to handle her own bees and wrote a series of poems about her experiences. All five of the bee poems deal with literal scenes of Plath working with the bees. However, a dramatic motif of death is also presented within each of the poems. For example,

"The Arrival of the Bee Box" is in the most literal sense about, strangely enough, the arrival of a bee box: "I ordered this, this clean wood box / square as a chair and almost too heavy to lift" (Plath *Ariel* 58). A closer look at the poem demonstrates Plath's death motif. She compares the bee box to "the coffin of a midget / Or a square baby" (58). The protective gear she wears to keep herself from being stung is "a moon suit and a funeral veil" (59). In a later bee-poem, "Stings," Plath turns herself into the Queen Bee, or what Anne Stevenson calls "the enraged, vengeful daughter" (263). Within the bee-sequence, biographical elements like death, father, and bees come together, which is yet another indication of Plath's confessional style of writing.

According to Ted Hughes, the poem that most represents Sylvia Plath's poetic creation of Otto is "Little Fugue." He calls this poem a "point blank, demythologized assessment" of Otto. He believes the poem to be an extension of "The Moon and the Yew Tree," in which the "phallic yew" is Plath's father (qtd. in Stevenson 236).

Perhaps for a few years, a man that Plath could love and be loved by temporarily filled the void left by her father, the "phallic yew." There is certainly evidence to suggest that Plath saw Hughes as a replacement for her father. "Full Fathom Five," a poem written long before the *Ariel* manuscript, is said to display Ted as the sea-father Neptune, whom Plath admits is a reborn version of her father (Stevenson 128). Furthermore, in a December of 1958 journal entry, Plath writes, "Me, I never knew the love of a father, the love of a blood-related man after the age of eight . . . I hated men because they didn't stay around and love me like a father (Plath, *The Journals* 431). Plath goes on to explain that Hughes compensates for the loss of love she faced when her father died:

My husband supports me in soul, body and by
feeding me bread and poems. I happen to love him .
. . . I needed after thirteen long years of having no
man who could take all my love and give me a
steady flow of love in return, a man who would
make a perfect circuit of love and all else with me.
(434-435)

This tall and handsome man who would dissolve Plath's emptiness and lack of love would betray her in the worst way. He abandoned her for a married woman—the wife of a poet-friend. The betrayal of a lover is bad enough, but Plath had invested more than just time and love. She had sacrificed more than just hours of domesticity that could have been spent writing; she put her hope in Ted Hughes. She allowed him to be the one that could heal her, and instead, he abused her.

After her separation from Hughes, Plath began writing the majority of the *Ariel* poems. In a letter to her mother, she describes her motivation:

Every morning when my sleeping pill wears off, I am up about five, in my study with coffee, writing like mad—have managed a poem a day before breakfast . . . terrific stuff, as if domesticity has choked me. (Plath, *Letters Home* 466)

In the days following Hughes' betrayal, Plath wrote a whole series of poems about him and the affair: "The Rabbit Catcher," "The Detective," "The Courage of Shutting-up," "A Secret," "The Jailer," "Stopped Dead," "Amnesiac," "Purdah," and "Gulliver" (Rose 71). Only one of these poems, "Gulliver," survived Hughes' editing of Plath's original manuscript. However, Hughes played a major role in Plath's creative process, that is, in what was *intended* to be her original message. Like Otto, Hughes makes appearances throughout the published *Ariel* poems, but those that deal directly with the affair are not included in her book.

Hughes was able to have unabashed control over Plath's work because she died intestate. Therefore, at death her entire literary estate passed over to him. There has been a huge debate over his having complete control over her estate, but English law rested on the side of Ted Hughes. As a result, Hughes could make whatever changes to Plath's manuscript he saw fit. He not only left out the poems that were obviously directed at him, calling them "the more personally aggressive poems" (Hughes 109). However, he also rearranged the order that they were intended to be in. In her book, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, Jacqueline Rose points out that had the poems been left in Plath's original order, the first word of the

book would have been "love," and the last, "spring" (71). According to Paul Alexander, Hughes succeeded in rearranging poems from the original manuscript, deleting fourteen, and adding thirteen others (339).

In his book, *Rough Magic, A Biography of Sylvia Plath*, Paul Alexander also provides insight as to how the *Ariel* manuscript was published. According to Alexander, Hughes began preparing the *Ariel* manuscript in 1963. The same year, he took the manuscript to William Heinemann, who held the option on Plath's next book because his company had published *The Bell Jar* (340). Heinemann offered Hughes a contract, but the two of them could not agree on terms. Hughes decided to take the manuscript to his own publisher, Faber and Faber. They offered him a large \$750 advance, with a 15 percent royalty on all hardbacks sold, and a 100 percent royalty on anthology and broadcast rights. Soon thereafter, the first edition of *Ariel* was released in England, without an introduction. Hughes felt emotionally incapable of writing one (340-341).

Soon, publishers in the United State became interested in *Ariel*. Olwyn Hughes, Ted's sister, acting as agent for the Plath estate, began bargaining with Alfred A. Knopf. Olwyn told Knopf that she would consider using his publishing house if he provided the Plath estate with rights to Plath's *The Colossus*. However, a deal could not be reached (Alexander 340). Finally, in 1965, Harper and Row, Hughes' American publisher, offered the Plath estate the same deal offered by Faber and Faber. Hughes accepted the terms and Harper and Row commissioned Robert Lowell to write the introduction for the American release of *Ariel* (342).

The 1968 and 1999 HarperTrade releases of *Ariel* both contain the Robert Lowell foreword. The covers are a plain white color with large black letters stating the title of the book. The bottom of the front cover reads "From the Introduction by ROBERT LOWELL 'In these poems, written in the last months of her life, and often rushed out at the rate of two or three a day, Sylvia Plath becomes herself, becomes something imaginary, newly, wildly and subtly created . . .'" (*Ariel*). One scholar has commented that having the Lowell quote on the front cover gives the reader no choice but to make the immediate connection between Sylvia

Plath's poetry and her death (Brain 5).

The English Faber and Faber edition of Plath's poems also has a very plain cover. Besides the "ff," common on all Faber and Faber books, only the words "Sylvia Plath," "Ariel," and "poetry" appear on the cover. One of the Faber and Faber editions contains a foldout cover with a quote from Seamus Heaney and a few lines of biographical information. Otherwise, the book is without introduction and relatively to the point (Plath, *Ariel*).

Despite all of the differences in packaging, all *Ariel* editions have one major thing in common. Within the first few pages of each edition, a dedication reads, "For Frieda and Nicholas." In a December 14, 1962 letter to her mother, Plath conveys that she plans on dedicating her next book of poems to her two children, Frieda and Nicholas (Plath, *Letters Home* 491).

Following the release of *Ariel*, the daily Times called it "'important,'" and Plath's poetry, "'notable'" (Alexander 341). A more favorable review was given by the *Literary Times Supplement*, who called *Ariel* "'one of the most marvelous volumes of poetry published for a very long time'" (342). In its first published year in England, *Ariel* sold over 15,000 copies (343). According to John Kehoe of *Biography*, it has sold over 3 quarter of a million copies since its release, making it one of the best-selling volumes of poetry of the 20th century.

Several of Plath's *Ariel* poems have even been anthologized, appearing in the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Plath is packaged within the context of the sixties, 1966 to be exact. The founding of the National Organization for Women and the "2nd wave" of feminist movement are the two historical references that sit on the *Norton* timeline with Plath. Excerpts from *Ariel* are located beside those from James Merrill's *The Broken Home*, which is also considered to be a confessional work (Michelson).

Ariel, though successful, has received its share of criticism. Critics seem to be bothered most by Plath's tendency to metaphorically equate herself with victims of the Holocaust. Anyone familiar with her biography would understand that she uses images of victimage in order to convey the extent to which she has been abandoned or abused or neglected. Nonetheless, some critics feel

that the comparison is too extreme and even vulgar: "There is something monstrous, utterly disproportionate, when tangled emotions about one's father are deliberately compared with the historical fate of the European Jews; something sad" (Howe, *The Critical* 158).

One particular book of criticism, simply titled, *Sylvia Plath*, does a good job of summarizing much of the negative feedback Plath's *Ariel* has received over the years. The book does contain one or two seemingly positive essays, but they appear to be placed within the book's pages merely to make it seem like more of a critical analysis and less of a devotion to slandering every aspect of Plath's work. The editor's introduction, written by Harold Bloom, is in no way impartial. He tells the reader that upon reading *Ariel* he was immediately reminded of something Oscar Wilde once said: "All bad poetry springs from genuine feeling" (3). He goes on to comment on Plath's "Lady Lazarus," particularly in response to those who believe the poem to be about transformation:

With its gratuitous and humanly offensive appropriation of the imagery of Jewish martyrs in Nazi death camps . . . ["Lady Lazarus"] seems to me a pure instance of coercive rhetoric, transforming absolutely nothing. The reader is harangued, not persuaded, is my baffled protest. (4)

Ted Hughes, essayist, makes an appearance within Bloom's book of essays. Hughes conveys his belief that Plath's *Ariel* voice is her "other"-a thing within her, freed and liberated to say what it needs to say (118). This "other," or "new self-conquering self," cannot save Plath from death. Fortunately, Hughes is kind enough to provide the reader with advice by conveying a very valuable lesson that can be learned from Plath's example: "the moment of turning one's back on an enemy who seems safely defeated, is the most dangerous moment of all. And . . .there can be no guarantees" (119). Therefore, according to Hughes, Plath's *Ariel* voice and death can be attributed to her "other" or "self-conquering self"-which seems far too convenient a thing for him to argue.

It would probably be safe to say that Hughes' diffusion of the *Ariel* poems has generated as much reception as the poems them-

selves. Actually, as a result of Hughes' diffusion, the poems, and Plath's suicide, two battling camps have emerged: one pro-Hughes and the other pro-Plath. According to an article appearing in a 2000 *Christian Science Monitor*, "Sylvia Plath became an international bestseller and a cult figure in the vibrant new Woman's Movement following the posthumous publication of her 'Ariel' poems in 1965" (Gillian 19). Of course, those that made Plath their "cult figure," so to speak, would undoubtedly see Hughes as the man who sent her to her death and then censored her final words. A Hughes-centered rage has been the result.

Feminist-poet Robin Morgan, in her poem, "The Arraignment," creates a scene in which Hughes is arraigned for the murder of Sylvia Plath. By the end of the poem, the guilty Hughes is dismembered and done away with (Rose 99). Another example of fury toward the widowed Hughes is the grave defacement that has occurred since Plath was buried at Heponstall in Yorkshire. Her headstone reads "Sylvia Plath Hughes / Even amidst fierce flames the golden lotus can be planted." By 1992, the headstone had been replaced a total of four times because people had been continuously scratching out the "Hughes" (65).

According to feminists, Plath's writing is so important to their cause because it deals with issues of culture, like popular culture and its influences on what a woman is, as in how it defines femininity. Hughes' sister, Olwyn Hughes, is of the opinion that people capable of defacing a headstone or writing anti-Hughes poetry are "hacks, self-publicists and extreme feminists" (qtd. in Rose 93). Therefore, in response to "hacks, self-publicists, and extreme feminists" Hughes and his sister commissioned Anne Stevenson to write a Sylvia Plath biography that would do away with the so-called "fifth-hand gossip" circulating about Hughes and his marriage to Plath. According to sources, Anne Stevenson had to rewrite the book five times to make it fit the agenda of Olwyn Hughes (qtd. in Rose 93). The Plath-camp has its own biography as well, written by Linda Wagner-Martin. As one can imagine, a biographical event described in one of the biographies bears only the slightest resemblance to the same event in the other biography.

Indeed, all of the tumult surrounding the Hughes / Plath

conflict has warranted much attention. However, the argument from the Hughes-camp claiming that Sylvia Plath and her other-self were the only factors responsible for her death does not hold water. Hughes went to great editing lengths to ensure Plath would come off as a self-destructive woman, triggered by nothing but her own struggle with her "other" self:

But his careful editing of her manuscripts; his elimination of "The Jailor," "The Rabbit Catcher," and "Purdah" from *Ariel*; his efforts to exert control over the work of Plath scholars; his sister Olwyn's collaboration on a hostile biography (Anne Stevenson's *Bitter Fame*) and his own attempt to gut an even handed one (Linda Wagner-Martin's *Sylvia Plath*); his apparent destruction of manuscripts; and even his loss of manuscripts—all of these may be designed to make his assertion seem truer than it is. (Axelrod 19).

Aside from the attention paid to all of the controversial issues surrounding Plath's death and the diffusion of *Ariel*, there have been other approaches of reception. Some people actually pay attention to the poetry. Perhaps Eileen Aird does one of the most interesting assessments of Plath's work. She points out Plath's continuous use of domestic images that are usually looked at in a positive way—babies and balloons and beekeeping—but in *Ariel* they exist in a warped and distorted picture: "The world of *Ariel* is bleak, despairing, grotesque; maimed human beings call hopelessly to each other and are ignored" (70). Thus, the domestic is turned into the terrible inner experiences of a poet.

Obvious themes of death and rebirth are present in many of the poems, like "Getting There" and "A Birthday Present." However, the theme of rebirth is often difficult to find, and one is left thinking a poem is completely about death and the desire to die, which, in some cases, is true. In an essay appearing in *Ariel Ascending*, Anne Sexton's response is to explain why she and Sylvia Plath wrote and lived suicide. She cannot give a concrete answer as to why Plath was so troubled, but she does explain the mentality: "But suicides have a special language / Like carpenters they want to know *which*

tools / They never ask *why build*" (180).

Attention has also been paid to the mechanical aspects of Plath's poetry. Susan Van Dyne was determined to figure out if the poems written by Plath in her last months of life were done in a frenzied craze or if there was a computed method to them. She spent hours in the Smith College reading room going through Plath's manuscripts and discovered that her poetry was highly calculated. For example, she stated that the "Lady Lazarus" manuscript had been worked and reworked until Plath achieved her desired effect (133). Furthermore, books like Charles Newman's *The Art of Sylvia Plath* pay attention to Plath's use of structural elements like metaphor, rhythm, and diction.

A form of reception has also been to compare Plath with other great writers by studying the politics, history, and myth surrounding her poetry. Two examples have been to consider the writing of D. H. Lawrence and William Butler Yeats as inspirational to Plath's poetry. "Ariel" has been seen as a highly sexual poem dealing with rebirth. Some have argued that it deals with its subject by plotting the course of sperm. Biographical evidence suggests that Ariel is actually a horse. This has led scholars to equate her poem with D. H. Lawrence's "The Woman who Rode Away." According to Al Strangeways, both "Ariel" and "The Woman who Rode Away" involve a woman riding a horse going toward rebirth. In both accounts, the woman is stripped bare along her way (52).

Barnett Guttenburg has written much in the way of comparing some of Plath's writing to those of Yeats. He states that Plath "builds a complete system, with a Yeatsian antithetical vision and consistent clusters of Yeatsian imagery. In addition, she seems to offer a series of rejoinders on various points of disagreement" (138). Like Yeats, Plath creates a dialect between flesh and spirit in the way she deals with rebirth and reincarnation, a good example being the dialogue of "Lady Lazarus."

Responses to Plath's *Ariel* would take volumes to collect. Scholars have studied the trends of environmentalism within her writing; her message has been compared to that of Virginia Woolf and Charlotte Bronte; her treatment of English and American culture has been assessed; musical scores have been written to her

lyrics. The fascination with Plath continues. Miramax is in the process of working on a film about the controversy between Plath and Hughes. Apparently, Gwyneth Paltrow has already agreed to play the role of Plath (Gillian 68-70).

In the essay entitled "The Plath Celebration: A Partial Dissent," Irving Howe states that "after the noise abates and judgment returns, Sylvia Plath will be regarded as an interesting minor poet whose personal story was poignant" (15). Perhaps there is a pedestal of myth and "noise" that keeps Sylvia Plath in the spotlight. But *Ariel* was not the creation of a gas oven, an abandoning father, or a betraying husband. The words belong to Sylvia Plath and she presented them in a brilliant stack of paper worth revering. Yes, a quote by Robert Lowell on the cover of the book does make it more enticing and adds to the "noise." What a marvel to read poetry written on the brink of death. It is a great advertising scheme and it works. However, the fact remains that Plath-Queen-Bee, resurrected Phoenix, Jew, Mother, Victim-knew how to use words and images and create exaggerated worlds where the truth about man and society, domesticity and death, exists in full view.

Ariel is a marvelous collection of poetry, despite Hughes' rape of Plath's original manuscript. Her poetry continues to be read in schools and homes throughout the world. However, it is a shame that her original creation could not have disappeared quietly into the morning of the 11th and somehow ended up in a publishing house or in the hands of a friend. According to most biographies, Plath bought stamps the night before she died. If only she had used them on her manuscript.

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Our “Wonderful Society”——A Fraud?

Cody Hobza

“...We are all poor in respect to a thousand savage comforts, though surrounded by luxuries”
(Thoreau, H.D., p. 76).

“Finally, someone who thinks like I do!”-I thought to myself as I read this and many other lines in *Walden*. Money, money, and more money-everyone seems so obsessed with money. Most of people’s lives today seem devoted to the *obtainment* of money, or at least situations that may lead to its attainment. The most common answer I get when I ask people what they’ve been up to is-”Oh you know, school and work.” Of course, I am no exception to the flock. Every time I hear that reply I think to myself-”So what does that really mean?” What does this seemingly endless pursuit actually do for a person? Does it really make that person happy? Does it make me happy? I’m sorry, but I would have to decline.

I’ve always been somewhat of a thinker and philosopher myself, and the matter at hand is one I often ponder. I have more often than not thought of how much happier I would be with a simpler, more spiritual life where I could just “be” and actually live life. This seems to be the whole point that Thoreau is trying to convey in the first chapter and throughout the book. “...And the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run” (Thoreau, H.D, p. 73).

Take for example my brand new flashy 2001 Jeep Grand Cherokee. I was so pumped when I first went to Cornhusker Auto to tell them what I wanted. Of course, they did not hesitate, as my order was sure to make them rich. I got a decent deal, but in the end I had to pay what they required. It is now six months later and I ask myself-”Does this Jeep make me any better of a person?” Again, I must decline. The new Jeep is part of the reason I have been so stressed this past semester. I have to work full time, in addition to school, just to make the payments. Not only that, but as

I look to the future I see four more years of these dreaded payments. So, do *I* own the Jeep or does *it* own me? Sure I might be able to have some fun with the Jeep, go places I could not normally go, but is it worth not *living* a life? Once more, I decline.

Thoreau speaks of living a life similar to the savages, where all the bare necessities of life are gained first hand as they are needed, with the rest of life available to do whatever seems right. It would be a life of soul-searching, where the “I gotta’s” and “I shoulda’s” are almost entirely irrelevant. A life free of unneeded stress, anxiety, and depression—for these are the symptoms which plague our society today. As Thoreau states-”The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation” (p. 50). It’s as though most people know there is something wrong with their lifestyle, but are too afraid to change it. Or, perhaps, too “secure” to change it.

It is very appealing to me to have a life where I could work only six days to suffice for the whole year. I would much rather enjoy my numbered days here on earth rather than struggle to get through them. As Thoreau mentions, and I agree, it would be a great experience for anyone to build their own house, grow their own food (just enough to suffice), and live in harmony with nature. This seems to be the only real way to experience life on a true spiritual level, learn, actually *own* what one has, and reap only what has been sown. Most of the great known philosophers lived poorer than the poor. Philosophy today has become only a profession, not a true life, for today’s society does not allow for such a life.

Upon reading “The Place Where I lived,” it is quite obvious that Thoreau’s premises at Walden Pond made way for a very tranquil environment to explore philosophical issues. The landscape sounds beautiful! I’m not sure though, despite what has been said thus far, that I could get myself to partake in such a life. I’ve stayed in the outdoors many times and I can never seem to shake the “city boy” in me. Additionally, I have fallen head first into the very trap of modern society, which Thoreau states as “evil.” I do hope, however, that someday I will be at a place in my life where I can find the courage to acknowledge this adventure that my heart enthusiastically yearns for. I know that if I do not, I will someday regret it.

Thoreau speaks of the “classics” that he read during his stay on Walden Pond. He is fully confident that these books are the only ones that really question and answer the most meaningful ideas today’s society is puzzled with. As he states,

The book exists for us perchance which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find somewhere uttered. These same questions that disturb and puzzle and confound us have in their turn occurred to all the wise men; not one has been omitted; and each has answered them, according to his ability, by his words and his life (p. 153).

This is a very powerful statement since most of the books read today are for entertainment value rather than insight.

How many people today actually take the time to listen to the natural sounds of nature’s beauty-whippoorwills chirping, owls “hoing,” wind blowing, trees rustling, or animals crusading? God forbid let a bird into the house! These are all things that Thoreau welcomed into his kingdom. He lived *with* nature not against it. Time seemed useless to him, for all he had to do was wake up and enjoy the scenery. He did not completely withdraw from Concord however, the railroad was only a short distance away and he could often still hear the hustle and bustle of city life.

Thoreau watched and listened to railcars full of goods, animals, and the like pass by around noon. This would be his only interruption of solitude throughout the day, apart from the occasional city bell, laborer’s yell, or neighborly wagon wheel. If in his shoes, I’m not sure these particular sounds would have enticed me. However, he did not seem to mind them all that much. Somewhere in his heart, I believe, he still wanted a part of the life he once had.

Thoreau lived in absolute serenity, had a world to himself-his own moon, stars, and forest-or so it seemed at the time. As he states-”There can be no black melancholy to him who lives in the midst of Nature and has his senses still” (p. 176). Thoreau became accepting of every aspect of nature and chance. He found the good in everything he sought. Even flooding rains, with potential to rot and drown his seeds, still served him well, for they allowed the

grass to grow. It’s hard to put into words, although Thoreau has done it well, the uplifting senses and feelings he experiences not in loneliness, but in solitude. I can feel, as I read, what he feels, and it gives me peace of mind that I have not experienced in months. During his stay at Walden Pond, Thoreau belonged to the earth; it did not belong to him.

Why does society expect that we can only be happy around others? Do we really gain anything from our short interactions with others? Thoreau says we don’t-for they are too short. We see our significant others seldom throughout the day, mainly for meals, and must comply to all the rules and etiquette which society has deemed “right.” How enlightening is that? I know that I would much rather be alone in my thoughts than in a crowd of noisy fellows. On the contrary, the mind can be a scary place-especially when consumed by those dreaded “gotta’s” and “shoulda’s.” How is Thoreau any more alone than the hawk that flies by night to seek its prey? Quite simply, he is not.

In regards to civil disobedience, Thoreau has some very intriguing thoughts. Prior to reading this essay, it did not occur to me that just by paying taxes I may be supporting an institution that I do not believe in. I guess that is the price I must pay to live in this “wonderful society.” Of course, I could choose to stand up for what I believe in and go to jail for not paying my share, but would I be any freer than I am now? Am I really free *now*? I’m not sure that I am, maybe this is just the psyche that has been instilled in me. I am controlled in more ways than I can fathom, and just that thought alone is enough for me to want to crawl out of my skin.

“Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once?” (p. 395) We seem to think that we must wait for the majority opinion before we act. How did this come to be? Should the government not invite the minority opinion and welcome change? No, they would say, for that would not give them any power.

One of the most important points in this essay is the fact that a man should be led by his own conscience. Why should I need someone to tell me what is right or wrong when I have a perfectly

sound mind capable of determining that itself? The opposing argument defends that not all men are soundly capable of making such decisions. In part, this may be true, and I am speechless on the argument.

Should one allow others to tell him how he should think, let alone determine right and wrong? This seems to be the primary goal of the military. Thoreau defends the idea that men are not made to be machines-let the machines do their own work. I know that I oppose the military for this very reason. I will not just sit back and allow my brain to be barraged with garbage of soldier's valor and "necessary intense discipline." My own mind says that killing others is wrong, so why should I allow a holier-than-thou institution to convince me that it is permissible under "necessary circumstances?" I could never bring myself to do it. I am quite sure of the fact that I would avoid any attempt to be drawn into such a situation, even if my life was at stake or imprisonment the only alternative.

So what is the general point of this whole discussion? It is quite simple really. One's main concern should be that of living a life that he or she most wants to live. Hence, not to live one that is instilled in him or forced upon him, bringing with it a constant nagging of incongruity. Our only obligation should be to ourselves, as we cannot rightfully take care of another until this has been achieved. Just for once-a week, a month, or a year, we should take time away from the distractions of our present society and actually see what the natural world has to offer. I am convinced that this is the type of life that man was truly born to live.

John the Revelator as the Allegorical Alligator: Apocalyptic Females Unveiled Gabriela Easterday

A long time ago, a man had a vision. Many an angry fundamentalist has insisted upon a very literal interpretation of this vision. Even those most pious among us have had to agree that this vision, entitled the Book of Revelation, is, at the least, allegorical and fantastical. John's vision is completely immersed in a symbolic language so full of image and completely unlike previous books of the Bible where, for the most part, ordinary people seem live with the *occasional* intrusion of the metaphysical. The Book of Revelation is, from start to finish, a walk on the wild side.

Within Revelation, John of Patmos speaks to the seven churches of Asia and warns earthlings and metaphysical evildoers of an impending doom. Those who open the door to the knocking Jesus receive a free pass to the Heavenly City; those who do not receive eternal death. John's vision contains four major female images: Jezebel and her followers, "the woman clothed with the sun," the Whore of Babylon, and the Bride of the Lamb. The female image also plays an important role in Revelation 14:1-5. In this verse, John describes a righteous batch of 144,000 men, strangers to the ways of the women, therefore completely undefiled.

These female images are very rich in the way of literary elements. They belong to the vision genre and exist in a world of paradox, metaphor, symbol, and hyperbole. Some argue that the women are personified cities. Others discuss the method of allusion and intertextuality used by referring to early history and literature. Apocalyptic females are amazing multi-layered literary complexities that can be discussed endlessly.

Before getting into a discussion of the literary elements surrounding female images within Revelation, it is necessary to discuss three scholarly divas who have spent much time studying the topic at hand. Adela Yarbro Collins, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, and Tina Pippin have all come to different general conclusions about the nature of females within Revelation. The arguments of Yarbro Collins, Schüssler Fiorenza, and Pippin will also be discussed later

when Jezebel, the “woman clothed with the sun,” the woman-less men, the Whore, and the Bride are looked at more in depth.

Adela Yarbro Collins, the most flexible of the three, is interested in the historical context of Revelation. John wrote at the end of Domitian’s reign, a time full of cult worship and taxation; Revelation is cathartic because at the end of the text the Roman Empire is destroyed and Christians and Jews are released from their woes. By even qualifying the end of Revelation as the destruction of Rome, Yarbro Collins seems to be saying *of course the Whore is Babylon personified; of course the Bride is Jerusalem personified*. She pays a great deal of attention to the literary aspect of Revelation solely in its historical context without much attention to feminist issues.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza goes a step further than Yarbro Collins. She is interested in the ideological issues within Revelation while still adhering to its historical context. Schüssler Fiorenza argues that Revelation is cathartic for Christians in oppressive systems but concludes that the representation of female images within the text as Whore and virgin Bride, whether in reference to Rome and Jerusalem or not, causes people to view women as either evil or good. However, Schüssler Fiorenza goes no further than this; she insists that Revelation exists in a closed historical situation and cannot be read or interpreted out of context. Applying today’s feminist standards to Revelation would lead to magnifying the portrayal of women (Pippin, *Death* 51).

Tina Pippin is of a completely different opinion from Yarbro Collins and Schüssler Fiorenza. Pippin refuses to pay attention to history; rather, she finds it inconsequential and argues that the unabashed abuse of women and their bodies within the text is not something that can be worked out or overlooked just because of history. Furthermore, because the work is still read by women today, it has a specific negative and abusive effect on women readers because it promotes and executes hatred of women. Apocalyptic females are marginalized and made objects of sex and abuse. In Pippin’s own words,

The misogyny and disenfranchisement that are the roots of gender relations, accompanied by hetero

(sexism) and racism, along with violence, poverty, disempowerment, and fear . . . [Revelation] is the revealing of women . . . the ultimate “backlash” against women. And this Apocalypse of women is the destruction of women as women, through rape or pornography or stereotyping or any part of the mind-body dichotomy. (*Death* 47)

Within her writing, Pippin also expresses the notion that Revelation contains “the desire for and death of the female” (*Death* 16). Although I will not discuss the pit or abyss mentioned in Revelation as a female image, Pippin goes as far as to feminize the abyss by calling it a “ruptured hymen, no longer virgin” (*Apocalyptic* 73).

Aside from the opinions of Yarbro Collins, Schüssler Fiorenza, and Pippin, Apocalyptic females are very literary images. Jezebel is the first major female image mentioned in Revelation. Her presence in Revelation is a direct parallel to the evil Queen of I and II Kings. In I Kings: 29-31, Jezebel and her husband are seen worshipping the pagan god Baal. Later, in chapter nine of II Kings, in a verse that would forever label Jezebel as whore and seductress, she paints her eyes and arranges her hair right before she is murdered. She is then called “refuse” and put in a plot of ground where dogs may devour her flesh. I suppose you could say the so-called pagan-ness and whore-ness of Jezebel is upheld in Revelation 2:20-25. Her presence centers upon “sexual immorality” and the “eating of food sacrificed to idols” (2:20).

When considering that Jezebel appears in Revelation within a letter written to the people of the Church at Thyatira, a new dimension is added to the text. The letter accuses the church of tolerating Jezebel as a prophetess and then equates her teaching with “Satan’s so-called deep secrets” (2:24). In *The Drama of the Book of Revelation*, John Wick Bowman suggests that Satan’s courtship at Thyatira is portrayed as a woman’s seduction (33). Therefore, John of Patmos personifies Satan’s attempt to contaminate the people of Thyatira and uses Jezebel as his catalyst. This might serve to make some people more comfortable with the portrayal and destruction of Jezebel within the second chapter of Revelation, for she is

spoken of in very sexual woman terms. Phrases like “cast her on a bed of suffering,” “adultery with her,” and “strike her children dead” are often criticized by people concerned with woman issues within the Bible. Of course, Pippin would argue that personifying Satan’s evil ways as a woman’s seduction is barbaric in itself, despite the passage’s literary qualities.

The second major female image mentioned in Revelation is the “woman clothed with the sun” (12:1). The description of this female image is full of poetic texture and can be traced back to earlier texts within the Bible and also a mythological story. Like nearly all characters within Revelation, this woman is obviously an allegorical figure. We are told that she “gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations” (12:5). The male child is an apparent reference to Jesus, and although it would be easy to equate the “woman clothed with the sun” with Mary, the earthly Mother of Jesus, she is more. She is a symbol for the people of God—from whom the Messiah will come. In order to really convey her cosmic significance, John clothes her with sun, lays a moon under her feet, and gives her a crown of twelve stars. We are obviously meant to see the woman as a larger than life image. In *The Book of Revelation*, Robert H. Mounce argues that the moon beneath the woman’s feet suggests dominion and the twelve stars, royalty (246).

At the very beginning of chapter twelve of Revelation, “the woman clothed with the sun” is presented in the throes of childbirth. This scenario may add another dimension to the woman’s literary representation. The Old Testament often portrays Israel in bondage as a woman in childbirth. For example, Isaiah 26:17 reads “As a woman with child and about to give birth / writhes and cries out in her pain, / so were we in your presence, O Lord.” Therefore, “the woman clothed with the sun” is also a parallel to the people of Israel, which would support the argument that she is a symbol for the people of God. In *The Apocalypse*, Yarbrow Collins argues that when writing Revelation, John was familiar with a mythological story in which Leto gives birth to Apollo. Yarbrow Collins contends that the woman in Revelation is like Leto because she is portrayed as a Queen of Heaven who gives birth to a great man and becomes

the mother of a hero. John uses this story in order to give the Woman and her childbirth divine qualities (85).

Another literary element to the story of the Woman is presented in Revelation 12:14: “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.” First, the “desert” described does not have the connotation that we would associate with it today. The woman will be nourished in the desert. Therefore, it is probably less like a dry wasteland and more like the place mentioned in the 23rd Psalm: a place “beside still waters.” People being taken to a place where God may nourish them is a common theme in the Old Testament of the Bible and another intertextual element that biblical scholar Leland Ryken would argue leads to the unity of the book.

The woman being given eagle’s wings is also very significant. In fact, the eagle’s wings mentioned in Revelation 13:14, and the earth opening its mouth to swallow the river spewed by the dragon in Revelation 13:16, almost sounds exactly like the story of the Exodus. The Red Sea is parted and God “carried [them] on eagles’ wings” in order to save the people (Exodus 19:4). Throughout the Old Testament, eagle’s wings represent deliverance and enablement (Mounce 246).

Indeed, the story of the Woman contains a tremendous amount of beautiful poetic texture. Other examples are the personification of the earth in Revelation 12:16, and the flood spewed by the dragon as a metaphor for evil in Revelation 12:15: “the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed;” “Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.” Again, *flood* is a very symbolic word often used in the Old Testament. In Psalm 18:4 it is used as a metaphor for evil. In Isaiah 43:2 it is used as a metaphor for tribulation (Mounce 246). Images like dragon, eagle’s wings, and woman wearing sun all seem to be truly fantastical figures that are common in allegories like Revelation.

Perhaps one of the most disputed lines in the Bible is found in

Revelation 14:3-4:

And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure.

Taken at its face value, Revelation 14:3-4 appears to convey two disturbing lessons: contact with women is dangerous and bound to get you excluded from the company of the redeemed, and a woman's body is capable of contaminating a man. Clearly, a scholar like Tina Pippin finds such a passage from the Bible to be yet another unacceptable prod at the female and her body. However, many other scholars like Adela Yarbro Collins have made other arguments. Yarbro Collins believes that the words "with women," is merely John speaking from an exclusively male point of view. Therefore, one might say that instead of a true Christian being a man that abstains from sexual relations with a woman, the passage is meant to say that a true Christian, whether male or female, is sexually abstinent. Furthermore, Yarbro Collins points out that there is a great deal of imagery in the Apocalypse concerning priests and warriors, two groups expected to be sexually abstinent. The passage could be directed at these two groups (100).

John Wick Bowman and Robert H. Mounce give possible explanations for the seemingly overly demeaning passage from Revelation. Wick Bowman suggests that the phrase "by women" is "an unconscious slip" on John's behalf, especially considering that the word *virgin* in Greek is masculine in form but used to refer to both sexes (89). In his argument, Mounce reminds us that in the Old Testament, Israel is often referred to as virgin when being praised and called harlot when guilty (270). Jeremiah 18:13 reads, "Inquire among the nations: / Who has ever heard anything like this? / A most horrible thing has been done / by Virgin Israel." Jeremiah 3:6 reads, "During the reign of King Josiah, the Lord said to me, 'Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there.'"

Perhaps Daniel Olson makes the most compelling argument concerning the undefiled men in his article appearing in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. Yet another intertextual element is used when explaining Revelation 14:3-4 as Olson directs us toward the Book of Enoch from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. Within the Book of Enoch, an interesting story is told about a group of angels that cohabit with women and are defiled by them. In having sexual relations with these women, monstrous offspring are produced and God becomes angry with the angels. God explains to Enoch that humans must die and therefore they must reproduce. Angels are not given wives because they live forever and are meant to reside in heaven. From this Olson concludes, "angels are intended ever to remain virgins" (492). Olson argues that the statement made by John in Revelation 14:3-4 is a conscious allusion to the Book of Enoch. Those who are able to sing the song of the lamb are the 144,000 angels who did not partake in sexual relations with the women of earth.

No Apocalyptic female is paid more attention than the Whore of Babylon. The Whore, herself, is a metaphor; poetic texture is used in every aspect of her description. She is a parallel to "the woman clothed with the sun" and the Bride of the Lamb. She is the epitome of evil—a fact that John ensures the reader understands. Aside from her literary presence, scholars like Tina Pippin are disgusted with the way the Whore is portrayed. Pippin argues that the Whore is a desirable entity with obvious seductive powers—even John looks at her with amazement—who is desired and then disposed of in a horrible sexual death that is rejoiced in heaven. Pippin sees this over-dramatized and seductive death as abusive to the Whore and to women readers.

Once again, Yarbro Collins disagrees. She simplifies the Whore's presence by providing Old Testament examples of Hebrew personification of city, particularly a city being personified as a harlot. For example, Isaiah 23:17 reads, "At the end of seventy years, the Lord will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire as a prostitute and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth." It is Yarbro Collins' belief that a city is personified as a woman because of the womb-like encircling aspect of city walls

(118).

Obviously, the Whore is primarily identified with the city of Babylon. Jeremiah 51:12-13 reads, “The Lord will carry out his purpose, / his decree against the people of Babylon. / You who live by many waters / and are rich in treasures, / your end has come.” Like the passage from Jeremiah about the city of Babylon, the Whore is said to be seated upon “many waters” (Revelation 17:1). In case anyone is unsure, John clarifies the metaphor for the reader when in Revelation 17:18 he relates point blank, “The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

The only arguable element left concerning the Whore’s identity is whether or not Whore of *Babylon* is meant to be a metaphor for Whore of *Rome*. In other words, is the Whore of Babylon actually a symbol for the evil of Rome? The answer is yes, of course. Jews and Christians were persecuted and murdered by Rome in John’s time. It is evident that the luxury and power that Rome went completely against the doctrine of John. There are also a couple textual indicators. The Whore sits on “seven hills” (Revelation 17:9). Rome sits on seven hills. The whore is luxurious: “dressed in purple and scarlet . . . glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls” (17:4). According to Mounce, purple and scarlet were signifiers of luxury and splendor in Rome because the dyes were expensive to extract (309). Also, in Revelation 17:6, we are told that the Whore is “drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.” This, of course, is a direct reference to the Roman persecution of Christians.

The description of the Whore of Babylon is rich in literary texture. Perhaps the most interesting example is a character’s ability to turn her very essence into an intoxicating drink. In Revelation 14:8, the Whore “made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” Even God’s anger becomes a beverage: “God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath” (16:19). Later, in the first verse of Chapter 17, we are not told that people loved the idolatry of the Whore and therefore fornicated with her, but we are told that they were “intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.”

The beverage hyperboles continue as the Whore holds a

golden cup, this time not filled with a beverage but with “abominable things and the filth of her adulteries” (17:4). Even after the death of the Whore, the drinking examples persist. In Chapter 18:4, a voice from heaven says to “mix her a double portion from her own cup.” Later we learn that the Whore has gone as far as to ingest “the blood of the prophets and of the saints, / and of all who have been killed on the earth” (18:24).

Even the Whore’s death, as chaotic and disturbing as it seems, is full of literary artistry. She is destroyed in a terrifying scene with “peals of thunder,” “lightning,” and “severe earthquake” (16:18). The Whore’s own beast murders her. We are even told that he will “leave her naked,” “eat her flesh,” and “burn her with fire” (17:16). Intertextual evidence tells us that this is actually a worthy death for a harlot: “If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute . . . she must be burned with fire” (Leviticus 21:9).

Despite the almost seeming justification for the brutal murder of the Whore found in Old Testament examples, many scholars have joined Pippin in sympathy for the Whore. In *Apocalypse*, D. H. Lawrence has this to say about the Whore of Babylon:

Only the great Whore of Babylon rises rather splendid, sitting in her purple and scarlet upon her scarlet beast . . . Splendid she sits, and splendid is her Babylon . . . How they *envy* Babylon her splendour, envy, envy! . . . How the apocalyptists would have loved to drink out of her cup! And since they couldn’t: how they loved smashing it. (65)

Indeed, in a splendid display of joy, heaven rejoices at the death of the Whore. Chapter 18 begins in verse form with a mighty voiced angel shouting the good news: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!” John Wick Bowman refers to Chapter 18 as God’s wrath set to music (119). He goes on to describe the chapter as being constructed along the lines of a worship service. First comes the announcement of the theme followed by an appeal for the people of earth to leave Babylon. By verses 9-20, a composition that announces the judgment of God is presented in the three doom songs. Within the doom songs, the kings, merchants, and sailors mourn the death of the Whore. An emblematic prophecy follows in

verse 21 as a powerful angel conveys that Babylon is doomed, “never to be found again.” Finally, by Chapter 19, the worship service concludes with the Hallelujah Chorus: Amen, the Whore / Babylon / Rome, is finally dead (Wick Bowman 119-125).

The last major female image to be mentioned in Revelation is the Bride of the Lamb. All apocalyptic females are archetypal: Jezebel, defiling women, and Whore belong to one group; “woman clothed with the sun” and the Bride belong to the other group. The Bride, in the way she is described and presented, is a direct parallel to the Whore of Babylon. Like in the case of the Whore, John clearly states his metaphor: “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband: (Revelation 21:2). Both the Whore and the Bride are linked to precious jewelry, but the Bride’s jewelry is *good* jewelry. Unlike the Whore’s scarlet and purple, the Bride is adorned in fine bright white and pure linen.

Therefore, in both cases, John announces the connections between female and city and then goes to great lengths in describing their outfits. However, the most significant parallel is that both the Whore and the Bride are in the same instance woman *and* city. In both cases it is somewhat disturbing, but in the Bride’s case it is a little more alarming. In Chapter 21, verses 9-21, the Bride is described as “the wife of the lamb”—clearly a female image. However, she is then immediately spoken of in architectural terms: “great, high wall with twelve gates . . . three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west . . . laid out like a square. . . 144 cubits thick, by man’s measurement.”

Once again, Yarbrow Collins is there to provide the rationale behind John’s personifying of the New Jerusalem. She writes, “the marriage of the Lamb is a metaphor which expresses something about the quality of life determined by God’s rule. It is joyful, abundant, life-affirming existence” (132). Therefore, the marriage of the lamb is another indicator of the hero’s victory. Of course “marriage” and “banquet” are symbols that are used in literature to celebrate life. The city is made a Bride in order to reaffirm the victory of God—a celebration of life for the righteous. Obviously, the text portrays the heavenly city of the Bride victorious over the

earthly city of the Whore.

Throughout history apocalyptic females have even served to fascinate visual artists. Albrecht Dürer, a German Renaissance artist, designed a woodcut for Cranach’s 1535 Luther Bible. He used the Whore of Babylon as his subject matter [Figure 1]. The Whore is obviously drunk, dress hanging off of her left shoulder. She is riding her multi-headed beast and carrying her golden cup.

Dürer’s picture plane is divided into four sections. The section in the upper right displays a burning city, an obvious allusion to Babylon / Rome. The Whore also sits on the right side of the work. There is no visual line or boundary separating the city from the Whore, stressing the whore and the city’s metaphorical relationship. The left side of the work consists of a marching army coming out of the clouds of heaven, and below that, the kings, merchants, and sailors of the doom songs stand and admire their Whore. Dürer’s work is illustrative of the chaos in plot presented in the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Revelation.

William Blake, a painter, engraver, and poet of Romanticism, depicted many biblical images within his work. “The Great Red Dragon and Woman Clothed with the Sun” is Blake’s tribute to Chapters 12 and 13 of Revelation [Figure 2]. In this piece, the Dragon floats above the woman. He is grotesque-horned and curly-tailed. He floats in the picture plane above the Woman and is clearly of a darker shade than she. The light source in the work is frontal and directed upon the Woman. Bathed in light and pregnant, the Woman does not appear to be the helpless victim in need of God’s rescue, as she is portrayed in Revelation. Her arms and wings are outstretched as she looks up ready to protect her child from the Dragon’s harm.

Obviously, Apocalyptic females have been interpreted and portrayed in innumerable ways throughout history. Even their very literary presence cannot give exact direction or definition to what they are or, rather, the message they were intended to convey. However, they truly exist in a fantastical world full of poetic texture. John’s allegorical vision is immersed in symbolic language. Metaphysical women, like Jezebel, the Woman, the Whore, and the Bride, parallel one another and contribute to the unity of the Bible.

Every dimension of each woman seems to exist only by intertextual permission from Isaiah or Kings or Joshua. Even the 144,000 undefiled men seem to have their roots in a book from the Old Testament Apocrypha. Apocalyptic females, whether abused as is Pippin's belief or merely rooted in historical context as Yarbro Collins contends, are definite literary images belonging to the vision genre that serve to add unity and closure to the plot of the Bible.

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Emerson's Family: God, Nature and Man Gabriela Easterday

Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Brahma" appears to be sixteen lines of baffling contraries, but assuredly there is method to the poem. All of Emerson's work seems to relate to some big force—a *thing* that is so much more than what we know; a knock down of the understandable world. This thing that seems to unify all of us, whatever it is, may be slightly grasped if we sit on a hillside and look up at the stars, or pull up a lawn-chair beside Thoreau's pond. Transcendentalism dealt with this force. An explication of "Brahma" will illustrate the poem's relationship with certain tenets of transcendentalism, particularly those dealing with God, Nature, and Man.

First, it is important to note that in order to write "Brahma," Emerson borrowed several ideas found within Hindu texts. In fact, Emerson was very familiar with Hinduism. He used his knowledge of sources like the *Vishnu Purana* in order to write "Hamatreya," a poem published in the *Atlantic Monthly* ten years before the publication of "Brahma." By 1857, Emerson was comfortable enough with the *Vishnu Purana*, *The Bhagavat-Gita*, and the *Katha Upanishad* to incorporate them into "Brahma."

Since "Brahma" is so immersed in Hindu scripture, before explicating the poem or discussing its relationship with transcendentalism, the basic idea behind several of the sacred texts should be briefly explained. *The Bhagavat-Gita* explores the idea that each human is a part of a much greater reality, where the spiritual is of supreme importance and the material is of none. *The Katha Upanishad* and *The Vishnu Purana* contain the same notion of spiritual importance and further stress the Hindu idea of absolute unity. *The Vishnu Purana* is important to the discussion of "Brahma" because it serves to tell us about the identity of the speaker of the poem, Brahma. According to the Purana, Vishnu is the Supreme Being, present in everything and the cause of everything. Vishnu has divided himself into three parts: Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Emerson's poem deals with Vishnu as Brahma-Supreme Creator.

The first three lines of “Brahma” strongly resemble lines from *The Bhagavat-Gita*. “Brahma” reads, “If the red slayer think he slays, / Or if the slain think he is slain, / They know not well the subtle ways.” Similarly, the *Gita* reads, “The man who believeth that it is the soul which killeth, and he who thinketh that the soul may be destroyed, are both alike decieved; for it [soul] neither killeth, nor is it killed.” This passage, of course, could take on a variety of meanings. One might argue that to “slay” is not an absolute possibility because the soul mentioned in the *Gita* cannot be killed or kill-only the body acts and dies. This would make sense considering the Hindu notion of unity between soul and, well, everything. If the soul were killed, then everything, in a sense, would be killed also.

Another interesting element to the first three lines is the word “think.” Line one does not say *if* the red slayer slays, it says *if* he “think” he slays. The word “think” points out that the line is not about slaying or being slain at all, it is about a way of thinking. The killer thinks he kills only because he *thinks* there is such a thing as killing

Luckily, the final line of the first stanza is there to tell us that the particular way of thinking expressed in the first two lines of the poem is absolutely wrong, or rather, inconsequential because, put subtly, “I,” the Brahma, “keep, and pass, and turn again.” According to Hindu doctrine, Brahma is in the unending habit of creating and recreating the world. In other words, creation is unending and if the soul of man and Brahma are one because of absolute unity, then it must mean that the soul, like Brahma, continues also to “keep, and pass, and turn again,” being neither “slayer” nor “slain.”

The first two lines of the second stanza make sure that we do not forget the so-called *all-ness* of the Brahma: “Far or forgot to me is near; / Shadow and sunlight are the same.” In other words, that which people *think* is forgot or far is actually near, and that distinction people give to light and dark is actually all the same to the Brahma. Simply put, he is and he is *all*. Your sun and your shadows and your far and your forgot are simply irrelevant, because as we learn in lines six and seven, even “The vanished gods to me appear; / And one to me are shame and fame.” The Brahma cannot

be shamed because the *only* reason fame exists is because people think that there is such a thing as shame-the same goes for sunlight and shadow and forgot and near. People may invent whatever illusions to live by, whether it is shadows or fame, but “Brahma” tells us of an absolute unity that has nothing to do with the outward appearance of things.

The third stanza begins by telling us that there is fault in not considering the bigger picture or unity / one-ness of the Brahma: “They reckon ill who leave me out.” In line ten we learn something of unity because we are told that the Brahma is the end and the means: “When me they fly, I am the wings.” Not only must one fly the Brahma, but they must use him as the wings also. The stanza finishes off with, “I am the doubter and the doubt, / And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.” Doubter and doubt are interesting words used in line eleven. Perhaps their significance goes back to line nine where the speaker talks about those who “reckon ill” by leaving him out. Brahma is one in unity even with those who doubt the presence of *the* unity. In fact, the Brahma is the doubt that doubts the existence of the Brahma and the unity. As we learn in line twelve, even the song by the Brahmin is Brahma, about Brahma, sung by Brahma.

Lines thirteen and fourteen of the fourth stanza could be considered confusing statements to one unfamiliar with Hindu teachings: “The strong gods pine for my abode, / And pine in vain the sacred Seven.” Most scholars agree that the “strong gods” mentioned are those that will be absorbed into the Brahma at the close of a Kalpa. Kalpa is one day in the life of the Brahma. At the end of one Kalpa, the Brahma rests for a Kalpa and then re-Creates. Therefore, in saying that the strong gods pine for the abode of the Brahma, one may argue that they pine for the allotted time when they will be absorbed into him. The “sacred Seven” are also seen within the text pining, however, they pine in vain. It is interesting that Brahma distinguishes himself from the “sacred Seven.” In nearly every other line throughout the poem, the Brahma claims to be a part of whatever is mentioned. There is not really a sense of that in line fourteen. This admittedly perplexing. The sacred seven do not seem to fit into the flow of unity with Brahma present

throughout the rest of the poem.

The last two lines of the poem could probably be analyzed for pages on end: “But thou, meek lover of the good! / Find me and turn thy back on heaven.” Line fifteen makes it seem as though the Brahma is speaking to us. For argument sake, let us say that I am the “thou” in the poem. I am “meek” and I love “good.” From the first couple of stanzas we have learned that “good” cannot be taken literally, for the Brahma does not seem to adhere to things like “good” and bad, “sunlight” and “shadow.” Perhaps since he has already illustrated to us that things like “good” are only illusions, he is being somewhat sarcastic. He is calling me “meek” and “good” in jest-as if to say, *I already told you that such things do not matter*. So in line sixteen, he is telling us to let go of those illusionary things-sunlight, shadow, good, meek, etc.-and come to believe in this unity with him, which, by the way, we belong to whether or not we like it. For there is only him, and in turn, if we are indeed one with him, there is only us-not good, not shadow, and not sunlight. However, it is important to point out that Brahma does not say that there is *no* sunlight or shadow, rather that the idea of sunlight and shadow are human illusions. Understanding Hinduism and Emerson’s philosophy would mean knowing that the Brahma could not possibly be disregarding nature and labeling it non-existent. He means that it is only non-existent as an entity in itself. Nature is Brahma and man and vice versa. The fact that the Brahma creates and recreates nature, including man, would suggest that he is a part of nature and man.

“Turn thy back on heaven,” lower case “h,” could also have various interpretations. He could be telling us to forget the idea of the little conformist piece of heaven, and come to realize a unity with him. Only then will we understand what *is*. I suppose he could also be expressing the notion that the Brahma creates and recreates the world, which has nothing to do with harps and winged seraphim.

“Brahma” recognizes many of Emerson’s transcendentalist beliefs. He merely uses Hinduism as a vehicle to express his own philosophies in the form of a poem. Emerson believed in an identity of being, in which there is unity among Man, Nature, and God,

Nature being God’s soul. Obviously, “Brahma” illustrates a cosmic order beyond our comprehension, but it also provides a sense of the unity Emerson wrote about in other works. For example, Emerson believed in something called the Over-soul. The Over-soul is like an inner spark, or common mind, contained by God, Nature, and Man. It is the Over-soul that unifies the three. The Over-soul cannot be tapped into by paying attention to illusion and logical thinking-thinking in terms of “good” and “forgot” and “sunlight”-but through meditation and intuition. Emerson demonstrates this notion in his essay entitled *Nature*:

But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches . . . The stars awaken a certain reverence because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence.

A “kindred impression” suggests man being related to, or a part of, the stars and therefore nature. By looking at the stars we can be “open to their influence” and tap into the, so-called, godhead that unites us with the stars, a part of God’s soul.

“Brahma,” a poem about the Hindu notion of absolute unity, can easily be thought of in terms of the transcendentalist notion of unity between God, Nature, and Man. Obviously, the poem is only sixteen lines long and cannot provide a complete summary of Hinduism or transcendentalism. However, within “Brahma” a definite sense of unity is established between Brahma and everything around him. As was illustrated in the poem, Brahma is everything. One could argue that Brahma is intended to be a parallel to the Over-soul or Supreme Mind that unites Man with Nature and God. According to Emerson, if we can only tap into this unifying force, we have unlimited potential.

Joe and Mark's Excellent Adventure
Drew Morrison

ACT I

It is the year 2001. The Month is November. The setting is Wayne, Nebraska. The very sarcastic but gregarious Dr. Joe Blankenau has just entered the home of the lively and fanatical Dr. Mark Hammer..

Joe: Mark! Mark! Hey, where are you? It's Joe!

Mark: I'm downstairs!

Joe: *(As Joe opens the steel encased door that leads to the basement, he is intrigued by the tinkering and humming coming from just down the stairs. Mark is vigilantly working...)* Mark, what is this pile of junk?

Mark: Uh, yeah. Umm, well Joe, actually, this is a piece of Scientific Art. To be precise, it is a Quantum In fluxion Transclerator Plasma Lan Module.

Joe: Oh, yeah. I can uh, umm, see the, um outlines of the...hypo-influxorator...umm..Quanta...mega... What is it?

Mark: It's a time machine, Joe.

Joe: *(Styly chuckling)* Oh, of course...just making sure that you knew what you were talking about.

Mark: *(Sarcastically)* Yeah.

Joe: So Mark? Why is it so big? I saw one of those in Pamida for \$4.99. It even had a cool glow in the dark Mickey Mouse dial.

Mark: Uh, Joe, I believe you are referring to a Timex. That is a watch, this is a time machine. That tells time, this goes back and forth through time. Do you get it?

Joe: *(Letting out a slightly embarrassed laugh)* Yah, yah...Mark, I was just joking. You know me, ha-ha, I just love to see...

Mark: *(Agitated)* Joe, you can stop now.

Joe: *(Clears his throat)* Right.

After a few minutes of silence, Joe cannot bear it anymore. He

has decided that he will boldly ask Mark why he is building a time machine.

Joe: Hey Mark. *(Small cough, followed by Silence)* So, Mark. *(Silence)* Uh...did you see that sky today? Let's talk about blue.

(Joe, waiting for a response only gets a silent stare from Mark, that emits the accusation of, "you're an idiot.")

Joe: *(Exasperated)* Okay Mark, this is killing me! Why are you building a time machine?

Mark: Well, Joe. I plan on traveling into the past, so that I may research the history of Wayne. The information that I will attain should be valuable and very helpful for one of my favorite students, Drew Morrison. *(Rambling on)* I feel that Drew is over-worked and he deserves a little help, because his days are so busy and difficult.

Joe: *(Confusingly)* Drew?

Mark: He is a tremendous student and person and I doubt that anyone works harder than he does.

Joe: *(A very lost look on his face)* Drew?

Mark: And I bet that he is so humble, that he wouldn't even think of trying to make himself look good by over-exemplifying his average traits within the constructs of a term paper for a class.

Joe: *(Shaking his head)* Mark, you're insane. Not only because of what you just said, but also because of this *(points to the time machine)*. C'mon Mark, a time machine? Do you really think that this will work? Uh, hello, reality check to Mark, there is no way this is going to wo...*(before Joe can finish, Mark gets the time machine running. With a shocked look on his face Joe responds in a cracked voice)* Can I go?

Mark: *(With an "I told you so" tone)* Sure Joe.

Joe: Holy jeepers Mark! It works! I can't believe it! You're a genius!

Mark: *(Dryly)* Yes, I know. As Mark warms up the time machine, he explains to Joe that they are going to the beginning of Wayne's existence. From there they will progressively head back through time, up to their present day.

Mark: Joe! (*Yelling, over the loud whir of the engine*) Are you ready?

Joe: NO!!

Mark: I'll take that as a yes. Here we go!

With a few more button pushes and a few turning of dials, the machine is ready to go. Mark silently counts down to one. And with a big flash of light and a muffled boom, they're gone.

Joe: (*Shrilly*) Aahh! Aahh!

Mark: Joe! Joe!

Joe keeps yelling and screaming. Tears rolling down his face.

Mark: Joe! Pull yourself together!

Joe is still hollering at the top of his lungs. Mark slaps Joe in the face to stop him.

Mark: (*With relief*) Are you done?

Joe: (*Sniffing*) Sorry, sometimes I get a little emotional. And plus, you were looking a little pale and I didn't want you to feel like you can't cry in front of me. I was uh, just trying to make you feel more comfortable.

Mark: (*With a smirk*) Right. Well, ready to get out?

Joe: (*Happy to be alive*) You bet..

As the two open the doors and step out of the time machine, Joe is quick to recognize a fairly developed settlement of Wayne.

Joe: Mark. Tell me if I'm wrong, but, am I seeing a lot of houses and buildings? If I were to guess, I would say that we aren't in the right time.

Mark: Uh, well Joe, you are right. There must be something wrong with the time inducer. I'll check it out.

As Mark tinkers with the time machine, Joe is taken back by how bare and vast the land around Wayne is. Though they have rested upon a small hill, he is still able to see miles in the distance.

Joe: Wow. Isn't it amazing how few trees there are? I think that I can only pick out a few grown ones. And they are pretty sparse along those acres.

Mark: Uh huh. You see, (*as he is still working*) trees were first put up by the early settlers in accordance with arborescence.

Joe: What?

Mark: Well, Joe. The common feeling of many settlers was

that the plains were stereotypically barren. They overlooked the harmonious inhabitation of flora and fauna, relegating the true native beauty that was indigenous to the area

Joe: Like what? I always thought that trees were a native plant.

Mark: Not around here. The main native vegetation was grass, everything from Blue Grass, to Compass Plants, to Switch Grass and others. And these grasses were part of a complex environment that included many insects, rodents and other animals small and large, each contributing something to the prosperity of plains. With cultivation and the introduction of foreign plants, such as trees, many of the native plants and animals were forced to leave or died, because their homes and food were no longer available.

Joe: So, all the trees and animals that we see in our time were founded upon the destruction, if not extinction of the environment that lived here before the entrance of settlers?

Mark: Correct.

Joe: So, what was the main reason for planting trees? In our time, there are a lot of trees and that just blows my mind to know that they are not even native to this area.

Mark: The trees would stop the wind from blowing away the topsoil of the cultivated land. Keep in mind preventing erosion is very important. The need for topsoil is universal. It holds nearly all the nitrogen and nutrients needed for crops to grow abundantly. Without good topsoil, crops would fail to grow.

Joe: So, was topsoil degradation the only reason for this...arborescence?

Mark: Good question. Umm...No, the farmers would also use the trees they had planted for lumber and a source of some fruit. And there was even an emotional tie-in to planting trees.

Joe: Really?

Mark: Yes. Understand that many of these settlers were coming from the East, where the majority of the vegetation, is some sort of forest. And even if trees were not in abundance, there were at least a few trees in sight. Planting the trees, gave a sense of comfort to the "frightening" expanse of grass, which these settlers first came upon.

Joe: Wow, uh that is interesting. (*Continuously pulling on his goatee*) Now that I think of it, wasn't there a timber act that might have also spurred this birthing of trees?

Mark: I'm not sure Joe.

Joe: (*Tugging harder now and more frequently*) Yeah, as I recall. There was a government policy to plant more trees. And I do believe that this was one of the first policies to actually change the make-up of the land. It was uh, (*thinking hard now, and pulling even more fiercely*) the Timber Culture Act of 1873! Yes, it was actually kind of an add-on to the Homestead Act of 1862, which as I am sure you know (*giving a look to Mark*), gave early settlers 160 acres of land to anyone who paid \$10 with the intent to cultivate it. Well, anyway. The Timber Culture Act gave these farmers an extra 160 acres of land as long as they planted trees on one quarter of it within four years.

Mark: Great Joe. (*Sarcastically*) I am really thankful for that tidbit of information.

Mark and Joe continue to chatter as Mark attempts to fix the problem.

Mark: (*After some time Mark stops, frustrated*) Oh, berrypepper!

Joe: What?

Mark: Nothing, just swearing to the tune of a mixed slushy that originated in Creighton.

Joe: (*Slowly*) O-kay. So, what is the deal there Mark? Did you figure out the problem?

Mark: Well, Joe... No. Everything seems to be working fine. As far as I can tell the only glitch is the time inducer. And with that not working right, we really don't have any control as to where in time we can go. But, everything else is fine.

Joe: (*Voice sputtering, wave's hands in the air*) Well Mark, I'm comforted to know that everything else is fine, except for the time inducer, I mean, why do we need to control where in time we go? You know, here today, to the end of the Ice Age tomorrow! (*Stuttering now*) Who cares if we never make it back to our own century! (*Red faced and yelling*) I do! Mark this is terrible!

Mark: (*As Joe continues to rant and rave, Mark sarcasti-*

cally replies) Well, Joe, look at the bright side, at least you will be able to see the Clovis people first hand.

Joe: (*Looking directly at Mark with nothing but fear in his eyes*) What! I was kidding Mark! Joking! I do not want to see what one of the first humans were like! The Paleo-Indians might have been great! But that was 11,500 years ago! I do not want to be 11,500 years into the past!

Mark: (*Completely enjoying this torture*) Oh, c'mon Joe, where's your sense of adventure?

Joe: (*Pointing to where Kansas is*) Back in that little town in Kansas, where I grew up! (*Trying to calm down*) This is absurd.

Mark: (*Silently chuckling, Mark picks up the bag he has been packing*) Well, Joe, considering the circumstances. There really isn't much we can do right now. So, let's just head into Wayne, get some information, and maybe by the time we are done. I will have thought of something. Okay?

Joe: (*To himself as Mark is walking away*) Oh man, my wife is going to kill me. There is no way she is going to believe that running to the store took me a few hundred centuries. Hey Mark! Wait up.

Mark and Joe's walk into town, though not long, still took them a while, because of the heavy and abundant concentration of Prairie grasses. Near the edge of Wayne, Mark and Joe make contact with two Wayne citizens. John T. Bressler and James Brittain.

Joe: (*Nervously*) Howdy! Fine people of the 19th century.

John: Hello.

James: Hello.

Joe: Uh, we're not from around here, as you might be able to tell. (*Quickly adds*) But we are from this time...yep...born and raised in the 1800's. Yep. Don't even know what the 21st century is like. Nope, never even heard of a TV. Actually I've never seen one...

Mark: (*Hastily interrupting Joe*) Hi, I'm Mark Hammer and my deranged colleague here is Joe Blankenau.

John: Nice to meet you. (*Offering his hand, while glancing at Joe in a perplexed manner*) I'm John Bressler.

James: (*Also offering his hand*) And I am James Brittain. Where from the likes are two from?

Joe: (*Once again fiercely pulling his goatee*) Oh, us? Uh, we're from over the hill...(*stuttering*) yonder. Just...past...the...tall..grass.

John: (*Stepping back a little from Joe, but nicely asking*) Oh, near La Porte?

Mark: (*Cutting in*) Um, you're going to have to excuse my friend here. He's a little out of it today...(*mimicking the action of drinking*) sometimes it's tough to just stop at one.

John: (*Relief upon his face and with a slight chuckle*) I know what you mean.

Mark: And really he wasn't completely wrong. We did come over the hill, but we are actually pretty far from home.

James: (*Staring at their clothes*) Well, I'd say. I've never seen clothes like those before.

How did you get that fancy writing on them? Is that an Indian trick?

Mark who was wearing an "I Love Grass" t-shirt quickly responded.

Mark: Well, we actually traded for these from a group of merchants in Boston, right before we came out here.

John: (*With pity*) I'm sorry. Joe fearing that things might go bad for them quickly changes the subject.

Joe: So. This place called La Porte. What's the story there? I must have been looking in the wrong direction, because I didn't see it.

James: Well, you could've stared right at it and still missed it. La Porte is all but completely gone.

Mark: Gone?

James: Well, there are a few families out there still, the old courthouse still stands but it's now just a farmhouse.

Joe: So, what happened to it?

James: Well, John, I believe that you could tell this better

than I could. John was one of the first out here.

Mark and Joe now extremely intrigued move close to John.

John: Yep, I originally came here from Pennsylvania, oh around 1870...(*scratches his head while gazing up into the sky*) yeah, 1870. But by then La Porte already had a number of families that had settled in... oh, I believe in around '69.

James: John, when was Oscar murdered?

John: (*Again scratching his head*) That was the summer of 1870, in late June, early July. A really nice guy, it was a shame what happened to him. Kind of scary knowing that I was only a few miles away when they got him.

Mark: (*Quizzically*) If you don't mind my asking, what happened?

John: Oh, not at all. From what I remember Oscar Munson was murdered by five Winnebago Indians while working his claim near Plum Creek. Didn't Nichols warn Munson they were coming? (*Looking at James*)

James: (*Faint look of memories drawn upon his face*) Yeah that's right. Nichols did ride up and tell him, but Munson just kept working.

John: Well, anyway, these five Indians went up to Oscar and told him they were going to take his scalp. Oscar, who like many of us does not speak Indian, didn't understand what they were saying, so he just shook his head and said "all right." So, they killed him, took off his scalp and cut off his head. They ended up finding his head about 40 yards away from his body, buried in a badger hole.

Joe: (*Gulping loudly and profusely sweating*) Are there still a lot of Indians around?

James: No, there never really were a lot in this area, but we do see some Omaha, Ponca, some Sioux, and a few Winnebago every now and then. There really isn't much confrontation between them and us.

Joe: So, you don't really trade with them much?

John: Nope, don't need too. We are not a trading village. With the exception of the blizzard last year, we have a very economically successful community.

Mark: (*Trying not to sound stupid*) This might sound stupid, but uh, what year is it exactly?

John: (*Lightly responding*) It's the year 1882, October the 30th to be exact. (*Leaning in and whispering to James*) You owe me five dollars, they're both drunk.

James: (*Whispering back*) Yah, must have smoked a little too much of that Indian tobacco as well. That Joe, fella, was mighty interested in if we trade with Indians or not, their supply must be running low. I'll pay you tomorrow.

John: (*With a quirky smile, turns back to Mark*) And hey, it's not a stupid question, I'm sure a lot of people forget what year it is. I'll bet that even some of us Nebraska fellows have forgotten it too.

James: (*With a grin*) Yep, I agree, without a doubt that each and every one of us 452,000 Nebraska settlers have lost track of the year and our good clothes sometime in our lives. (*Laughter between John and James, Joe laughs too.*)

John: (*Apologetically and still chuckling*) We're sorry. With the railroad going through Wayne we get to meet a lot of interesting people. Some stay others go, but none of has been like you two.

James: We don't mean any harm. Just having a laugh, sorry if we angered you. Plus it's actually pretty fun talking to two people who aren't from around here. We have a beautiful little village here, and we're more than happy to tell you all about it. And maybe if it suits you two, you could settle here for a while. You know, maybe sometime in the future.

Mark: (*Quietly to himself*) Yah, over 100 years in the future.

Joe: (*Seeing that Mark is a bit angry, decides to ask some questions.*) You spoke of a railroad, what's the story there?

John: The railroad actually is very significant to the creation of Wayne.

Mark: (*Red face now turning back to normal, is still angry, but intrigued*) Really?

John: Yep. You see, the railroad was actually supposed to go through our county seat, which is La Porte. But the Union

Pacific decided that it was going to be more economical to go from Emerson to Norfolk if they went through Wayne instead. You know, Wayne really is only about a year old, and in fact a lot of the businesses in Wayne were moved from La Porte.

Joe: So, Wayne was formed in 1881 and only because of the move from La Porte?

James: Well, technically. Yes, businesses and families did move from La Porte, like ole John here. He used to live in La Porte, and had even started up a bank with Mr. Patterson. But there were also a few settlers around here anyway. And when the Railroad was near completion to Wayne, that's when we all kind of just packed up and moved. Also back then, Wayne was originally called, "Brookdale." The railroad people wanted to call it that, but we had better ideas.

Mark: Was the railroad completed at the same time Wayne became a village?

John: No, we became an incorporated village in '81, and the railroad wasn't completed in...oh...wasn't it April of this year?

James: (*Squinting his eyes*) Well, no...John, the first official train came through in April, I am thinking on the 24th, but the railroad itself was actually done in February. (*voice drifting off*)

John: That's right, it was February

Joe: What is the population of Wayne?

John: (*Scratching his head*) Good question. (*Chuckles*) You'd think since I'm on the board I would know something like that...well, to become officially incorporated as a village you must have at least 200 within it, and we had surpassed that number easily before we even petitioned for the incorporation, so, uh, it at least has over 200.

Mark: Now, you say that La Porte is your County Seat. And as I recall you saying earlier, La Porte is practically inexistent. And the two are so close to each other, why not make Wayne the County Seat?

John: (*With a respectful nod*) That's funny you bring that up, because tomorrow, we are presenting a petition signed by 171 voters to the county commission to have it moved here. I am pretty confident that they will see it our way and I am guessing that

sometime in December their will be a vote on it.

James: At least that's what we are hoping.

Joe: *(Has been scratching and pulling his goatee for some time now, is dying to ask another question)* Excuse me, I know that this is off the subject now, but, *(breathes out through his nostrils)*, how exactly did you move those buildings from La Porte? Even a small one had to be difficult.

James: *(Shaking his head)* Oh, yes sir, they did cause problems. That was probably the most difficult event to get Wayne started. It was actually a man named Yost, who did nearly all of the moving. Kind of a sad story, *(pauses)* well anyway, he used a horse and windlass to move the houses and buildings. He tried to stick to the valleys as much as possible and ended up going through Logan. One of the houses was so big, I believe it was the Crawford house, we had to build a bridge across Logan Creek, which is just south of Wayne.

Mark: *(In complete amazement)* Wow, that is amazing that he was able to move buildings with pretty much just a horse. And without concrete roads, just think of how difficult that would have been...

John: *(Confusingly)* Concrete? What is concr...

Joe: *(Realizing Mark's mistake, quickly tries to change the subject)* So, you said that there was a sad story...I love sad stories... at least more than...un...sad...stories. *(Blinks a few times, while thinking, that was smooth, stutterlot)* Can I hear it?

James: *(Willingly tells the story)* Actually, it's more of a tragedy. You see, Yost was moving that Crawford house. And he had just gotten it across the creek, when *(Loudly slapping his hands together)*, "SNAP!" One of the ropes break hits Yost on his head. He was knocked unconscious...

Mark: *(Mark, thinking of the time he was given a swirly in High School, laughs.)* Hee. Hee.

James: *(Looking at Mark with a little shock)* He hasn't come out of it yet.

Mark: *(Gulp, while thinking, shoot, what were they talking about, just smile)*

Joe: *(Staring at Mark oddly)* So, did he die or...*(trails*

off)

James: No, nothing that bad. He just hasn't woken up. He was taken to the Hotel after the incident and doctors said that he needed surgery because of pressure on the brain. His mother, who came from North Fork, wouldn't allow the surgery. He's still alive, but unfortunately, that's about it.

Joe: *(Laughing)* Hee. Hee. Mark, he said, North Fork...too bad Joe Smith wasn't here to hear that. North Fork actually rolls off the tongue pretty well too.

James: *(A bit agitated)* What's so funny?

Mark: *(Realizing that they might wear out their welcome, smartly decides to say good-bye)* Oh, who knows, Joe has a strange sense of humor *(gestures the tipping of a bottle again)* but...Joe, we should probably go, we have a lot to do before we can make it home.

Joe: *(Thinks Mark is speaking in code, gestures and winks at Mark)* Right, it is, a, long way...home...(turns to John and James and offers his hand) Well, it sure was nice to meet you two and thanks for the short history on Wayne. It's been very helpful.

Mark: *(Following Joe's lead)* Yes, thank-you for everything. And good-luck on your petition. *James and John return the good-byes and wish the two luck. Joe and Mark decide it best to return to the time machine...*

Joe: Those two guys sure were nice.

Mark: Yes, they were Joe.

James: Those two guys were idiots.

John: Yes, they were James.

As the sun is setting, Mark and Joe are just returning to the time machine. Mark works on it for a few hours before he feels he has fixed the problem. Feeling confident Mark and Joe leave the village of Wayne and attempt to make it back to their time.

ACT II

Mark and Joe have just leaped into time again. Forgetting that the time inducer is not working properly, they hurl themselves into the wrong time, once again..

Joe: *(Clinching onto Mark's arm)* Ahhhh!!! AAhhhhh!!
I'm too beautiful to die!

Mark: (*Slapping Joe again*) Joe! Please contain yourself. Jumpin jimney's you're a wuss.

Joe: (*Drying tears from his eyes*) Sorry Mark, I was just so distraught from leaving all of those beautiful open plains. I was...uh... just, sad to leave.

Mark: (*Sarcastically*) Right. Well, are you ready to get out and see if we made it back?

Joe: Mark, I don't think the problem is getting back, but instead are we back to the future?

Mark: There's always a critic.

Mark opens the door and steps outside. Joe soon follows.

Joe: (*Kicking the dirt*) Well, Mark. There could be two possibilities. One, you haven't paid your mortgage in years and the banks have decided to take everything, including this sector of Wayne. Or two, we are still lost in time. (*Raising his voice*) Not to doubt your abilities, but I am guessing that you have no idea what you are doing and we are still LOST!

Mark: (*Is looking around in interest has been ignoring Joe*) Joe, I don't think we are back in our time...

Joe: Gee, what gave that away? The lack of ...everything?

Mark: Now Joe, I know you are a bit upset, but look. They've expanded.

Joe: (*Looking at Mark in an odd way*) What? Expanded? I think it's your turn to play the drunk.

Mark: (*With conviction*) Joe, look around. What do you see?

Joe: (*Grudgingly looks*) Well, Mark, I can tell you what I don't see. Where would you like me to start?

Mark: Joe, c'mon just look, compare it to when we just came from.

Joe: (*Though angry, follows Mark's gaze*) Wow, the prairie grass, it's gone. And the bare acres we just saw... they are cultivated and sectioned. Wayne has grown a lot too. And the trees! There are a lot of fricken trees. When in time do you think we are?

Mark: That's hard to tell, the development here is

amazing...is that a car?

Joe and Mark were too excited to stand and look. They soon took off towards the more developed town of Wayne.

Mark: Joe, look at all this business. "Johnson and Hawkins Veterinarians," "Theobald Lumber Company," "Artificial Ice Co." "Wayne Cigar and Tobacco Store." Joe, we have to be at least 40 or 50 years further ahead!

Joe and Mark were so intrigued and engulfed in the surroundings, they did not hear the voice of a man yelling at them.

Stranger: Hey! Hey! Mark! Joe!

Joe: (*Turning in shock to the man*) Uh, yes?

Stranger: (*Staring in disbelief*) Wow, you guys haven't aged a bit. You look practically the same as you did the last time I saw you. That was over 50 years ago.

Joe: (*Staring deeply, suddenly, realizes who the man is*) James? James Brittain?

James: (*Happily*) In the flesh. (*Shakes their hands*) Mark, good to see you. And you too Joe. Gosh, I almost didn't believe my eyes when I saw you two walk by. (*Jokingly*) I don't know what kind of alcohol you were drinking, but I surely wouldn't pass it up now. (*Still in disbelief*) Wow, you two look great, John, is going to be happy to hear I saw you two again.

Mark: (*Delicately*) It, uh... is a surprise to see you. (*Quickly*) A good one, but definitely a surprise.

James: Hey, you're telling me. When you two left, John and I were for sure you two wouldn't be back this way any time soon.

Joe: (*Ecstatic*) Well, James, for some reason, I have this odd attraction to Wayne, like maybe in another life or time, I will eventually have a family here, and maybe teach college or something like that. You know?

James: I know exactly what you mean. It's why I stayed, Wayne attracted me and I just couldn't let go. I even wrote a book about it.

Mark: (*Surprised*) Really? What specifically?

James: Oh, it was actually to help celebrate Wayne's 50 years of prosperity. I decided the best contribution was to write

about the history of Wayne. You know the little things, people don't know about. It was pretty fun. Someday, some kid is going to read it and maybe do a paper over Wayne. It is nice to know that I could help him.

Joe: Gosh, that is just great James. I see also that a lot of other things have happened in Wayne. I see a lot of changes. This is just amazing!

Mark: (*Getting a little nervous from James staring at him asks*) Uh, is there something in my beard?

James: (*Embarrassed*) Oh no, I just can't get over how little you two have aged. It had to have been about 57 years ago when we first met.

Joe: (*Sheepishly*) Oh, yah, uh, we are actually both, um, part... Slovakian. Yah, it's just our nature to really hide aging well. But, hey, enough about us, tell us what has been happening in Wayne.

James: Sure, I'd love too...

Mark: (*Interrupting*) James, just to be sure, but is the year 1938?

James: (*At first perplexed, but then smiles and gestures the tipping of a bottle and points to Joe*) Sure is.

James: (*Leads Mark and Joe to a bench and motions them to sit*) Gosh, where to start? Um..

Joe: Hey, how did your vote for the county seat turnout?

James: (*smiles*) Right, you guys came when we were about to send the petition. Well, anyway, there was a vote in December of that year, but it wasn't official until January of 1884. Let me see, oh, in 1889, we re-organized as a city of the second class; I believe the population back then was around 1,200. Right now, I believe there are about 2,400 in Wayne. So we have been steadily growing. And obviously, businesses have been booming up everywhere here. Uh, in 1885 ...Will... (*scratches head*)hmm, Will Weber built Wayne's first mill. It was called the Weber Flour Mill. That mill helped out so many families. You see before many of us had to go over 20 miles to get our grains ground. But when he came, we no longer had too; it saved a lot of farmer's time and money.

Joe: How about that railroad, I thought I heard a train

earlier. It's still operating?

James: Oh yah, we rebuilt it the Depot to be more modern in 1914. The train used to haul freight and passenger, but now it is primarily freight and express. Oh, and we just got a new surface for our highway 15. They just put a new oil mat surface on it, can you tell? (All three look at the road) Wayne also has a Public Library. And I believe that that was done in 1913. You see, we used to have our public books in the court house, but a group of four women, all lovely souls, felt it best we have our own library. And with a lot of push from them and a few supporters, it happened. It's actually called the Carnegie Library, but I think the building should bear their names. But anyway...uh, we had an Opera House built in 1889. And just these past couple of years, we opened our new \$70,000 City Auditorium. That thing is nice.

Mark: (*Interrupting*) James, sorry to interrupt, but uh, this was just question off the top of my head, but uh... did the telephone, help Wayne tremendously?

James: Oh definitely. Ever since we started using the invention of the telephone, in I want to say, 1897... Wayne has become closer as a community, and it has also helped to speed up business. I think it was Pritchard, W. W. Pritchard, along with another man were the first to get Wayne connected. They didn't start off with too many clients, but it didn't take long for people to wonder how we ever made it without a phone. And it wasn't until 1903, that we finally gave Nebraska Bell Telephone company franchise rights to Wayne. Oh, we have two newspapers in Wayne, there used to be three. The Wayne Herald, the Wayne Democrat, and the Wayne Republican. The Herald was the original paper started in La Porte. The Democrat started up in, oh, I'd say, 1884. A.P. Childs started that one. He used to own part of the Herald, but sold it to R.M. Goshorn, who sold it to W.H. McNeal. The Republican was started in 1893, by an E. Cunningham. And about a year later, he would buy the Democrat and consolidate the two. So, that's how we have two.

(*Snapping his fingers*)How, could I overlook an important development? Energy! We had a brand new power plant built in 1926. The first one I believe was started in around 1898. And I

think that the water plant was built before that in '91 or so.

Joe: What about your educational facilities?

James: Well, the City school was rebuilt on the west side of town in 1908. And the old ward school was torn down, which had served us since 1881. The building is magnificent. The ties to that building are already so strong; that I bet it will never get torn down. And you know, one of our key ideas in Wayne is that education is of utmost importance. That's why we offer free schooling. It's directly related to progressive democracy, and that's a wonderful thing. Oh, we have a College it's on the north part of town. It used to be known as the "Normal College" and I believe it opened in 1871, when Willard Graves deeded 5,000 acres of land in Wayne County for the purpose of a College. Oh, but it is important to talk about the Lutheran Academy first. Just because so many people have forgotten that it even existed. And to be honest it used to flourish. The Academy originated in Homer in 1886, but in '87 was moved to Wayne, because the thought that the railroad would bring more potential students. The Academy if I remember was situated above the State National Bank, on the second floor. I think they even shared the floor with a dental office. Most of the courses were taught in the building, but some were taught in the homes of the teachers. It all seemed to work well. But around 1889, the Academy just faded away. But it was at the same time that the Pile offer for a normal school came about and that was accepted by the city.

Mark: The Pile offer?

James: Yep. The Normal College really owes its entirety to Professor James Pile. He was a teacher from Fremont, and in 1889 was asked to assist our county superintendent in institute. He did so well, and was so quickly respected that he was asked back the following year to be an instructor in the offered ten-week summer school. The enthusiasm from the summer school was so great that plans were thusly established to start a normal college in Wayne. At first a board of trustees, whom had bought certain tracts of land on which the college would be built, owned the college. And they had drawn up Articles of incorporation that started on September 3, 1891, and would continue for 20 years. Mr. Pile was elected the President of the normal college by the board of trustees. At first

there was only one building, when it opened in November of 1891, but by the fall of 1892, another building had been built along with a dormitory. The school opened in September of 1892. It wasn't any sooner than 1895, and the state was talking about buying the normal college. And with a few tries through the legislature, on December 13, of 1909, the deed was signed, and the Normal College became known as Wayne State Teachers College. Actually, the name wasn't changed until, 1921 as an act of legislature. Mr. Pile was the President of the college until his death in 1909, and Dr. U.S. Conn, succeeded him until 1935, and now we have Dr. J.T. Anderson; ever since the state bought the college it has just grown, in fact they're building a new dormitory up there now.

Mark: (*In Amazement over the history of the school*) That is just amazing how the College has been through so much change.

James: One change I wish they would not have made was the recent destruction of Kingsbury Hall. It was erected in 1900 and was the first heated dormitory. It used to be the dinning hall as well, but plans were made to put another building there, so what can you do?

Joe: (*In deep thought*) Say James? What ever happened to Mr. Yost?

James: (*Smiling to himself and chuckling*) Oh good ole Mr. Yost...well, he actually awoke.

Mark: Really, how did that happen?

James: It's kind of funny, but seven years after the incident, his mother finally allowed the operation and just like that he woke up. For eight years he had been out, and the best part is that when he finally awoke, the first thing he asked was "is the Crawford house done?" (*Laughing a bit more to the memory, Joe joins him*)

Mark, who is amused by the story can't help but feel a bit down, by his surrounding environment. James, who notices Marks glum look, quizzically asks what is wrong.

James: Mark, is there something the matter?

Mark: (*A little hesitant*) Uh, James. It is really great that Wayne has thrived as well as it has. But for me it is a little sad to see such little native beauty left.

James: (*Somewhat in agreement and looking around*) I can

kind of understand where you are coming from. Sure, when Wayne was first started, the prairie grass was abundant. Few trees, and open rolling hills as far as the eye could see. But, Mark you have to understand. Wayne was destined to grow. Since the beginning, we had purebred livestock. We needed places to keep them; we needed land for them to graze. We also needed to support ourselves. And the land around here has excellent composition. We have everything from silty soils to clay loam. And regardless if it is silt or sand, it is all well-drained. We are imposed upon by continental climate. Warm summers, cold winters and moderate rainfall. We had to learn to use agriculture during the warm months and industry during the cold. We are producers as well as consumers. John Bressler envisioned a community great with prosperity. But that prosperity for us incorporated a change from what we felt was mundane, in the native rooted grassland.

Mark: (*Understanding James view, respectfully replies*) In a sense you are right, each man's treasure lies upon a different heaven. For you and many in this community your treasure falls upon the growing of corn and soybeans, and the raising of cattle and hogs. Beauty has come in the form of growth brought by the agriculture and industry that has boomed by necessity and expansion, because of this dream for prosperity. I respect that.

Joe: And Mark, it would be fallacious to say we love the place we work, but in the same sentence devoid everything related to the extinction of nature that once grew there on the very same ground. Do you think that we would have been allowed the opportunity to fall upon this love for native beauty, had it not been for the destruction of it?

Mark: (*Shaking his head*) Joe, I see what you are getting at...

James: (*Interrupting*) I do as well. I guess I never thought of all that we have lost because of our desire for growth. (*sighs, eyes staring blankly*)

James: Well guys, I have to go. It was great though seeing you two again. You made me think a lot about some things, and I am grateful. I hope it isn't another fifty years before I see you two again. (*One last look and handshake*) Well, good-bye and good-

luck to you two.

Joe: See-yah James.

Mark: See-yah.

ACT III

Once again, Mark and Joe climb into the time machine. Mark did some more final adjustment to the time inducer and this time he thinks he has it right...

Mark: (*In a higher pitched voice than Joe's ever was*) Aahhh! Aahhh!

Joe: (*This time, slapping Mark*) Mark! Mark! Get a hold of yourself! This is the third time we have done this. You need to control yourself.

Mark: (*Wiping tears from his eyes*) Uh, sorry Joe. I just didn't figure on you not screaming like a baby, so I thought it would be safe for me to do it too.

Joe: (*Pounding his chest*) Who me? Scream like a baby? Mark, you need to get your facts straight. I scream like a girl. (*Laughter between the two*)

Mark: Well, Joe. Are you ready to see if I got it right?

Joe: (*Adventurously*) Let's do it!

Mark and Joe energetically jump out of the time machine and both fall flat onto the basement of Marks' home. As they get up and dust themselves off, a look of sadness is evident between the two.

Joe: (*Sad and relieved at the same time*) Well, Mark, you did it. It looks like we are back.

Mark: (*Turning on the icon to the computer*) Let's check, just to be sure.... (*checks date and time on computer*).. Yep, it's December 8, 2001.

Joe: Mark, you know, I actually had a lot of fun. I mean... I love being in Wayne now, where the population is around 5,600. And twenty-six percent of our population is 20-24. Where there are close to 60 businesses, 10 churches to choose from, and Chicken Days, but uh, you know, I really didn't mind the whole lost in the past thing.

Mark: So, what you're saying is that if you had the choice to be in Wayne right now, where the average income for families is

around \$31,500. Where we could run to McDonalds or Subway to eat, and if we wanted, could stay at Grandma Butch's Bed and Breakfast. Or eat Buffalo meat and stay in wooden shacks. You would prefer the latter.

Joe: You better believe it! Wait, what about helping Drew? Do we have time to go tell him what we found out?

Mark: Joe, we have a time machine, think about it.

Joe: (*Dawning on him*) Oh...oh! And with a loud yippee, from Mark, the two jump back into the time machine. With a big flash of light and a muffled boom, they're gone...

Last Act

Prior to my research into the history of Wayne, I knew very little. And because of that, I held little respect for the town that I have called home for nearly four years now. And though my knowledge of Wayne's amazing history is minimal, I still cannot help but feel a sense of awe and wonderment, for what the early settlers accomplished, both man and woman alike. Wayne was founded upon hard work and an unstoppable dream that became a successful reality. And even though the heroes who built this city and the native beauty that preceded it have long since gone, let us not forget their memories... human, fauna and flora alike.

"A partnership with our citizens to maintain and enhance a city of superb livability, through quality, courteous, and accessible public service" ~The Vision of Wayne.

Housing and Transportation: Keys to Energy Consumption in Nebraska Chris Begeman

Imagine almost 2 million 100-watt light bulbs burning at the same time, or about 2.5 million microwave ovens all cooking simultaneously. That's the level of power OPPD put out Wednesday [July 21, 1999] as the utility's users continue a record setting week for electricity consumption.

-The Omaha World Herald, July 22, 1999

As we Americans move into the 21st century, our reality is significantly different than our science fiction dreams manifested in our popular culture. We still drive automobiles with internal combustion engines created nearly 50,000 yesterdays ago. We still live in houses constructed largely of wood and other plant materials. We have yet to perfect the *Back to the Future* technology that would equip us with personal, nuclear fusion based generators to provide our energy needs. Though we have increased the efficiency of our many machines, we constantly add countless energy-consuming appliances to our growing houses. Only a few short decades ago, appliances such as microwave ovens and personal computers were found in few if any homes (Energy Information Administration). Today these are standard.

The heartland of America is not exempt from the dilemma of devouring huge sums of energy in our daily lives. Though Nebraska is not the most energy inefficient state, our citizens are by no means pioneers in the increasingly important field of energy efficiency. The U. S. Census Bureau lists Nebraska as having the twenty-second highest energy consumption per person in 1997—a jump of three places from 1990. Nebraskans, on average, consumed 373 million Btu of energy per capita from all sources in 1997. The problem of excessive energy consumption in Nebraska stems largely from our thin population density. An excessive amount of inexpensive, available space results in larger houses spread over greater distances. An increasing distance between

these and other buildings means we drive further distances in our everyday lives. The size of houses and the need to commute greater spans contribute to increasing the per capita energy consumption of Nebraska even though our homes and cars are equipped with increasingly energy-efficient technology.

Crunching the Numbers

Housing constitutes a significant area of concern in relationship to energy consumption. Between the years 1970 and 2000 the population of Nebraska increased by 15% (U. S. Census). Though the number of housing units only increased by 12%, a higher percentage of these permits were authorized for single-family units. In 1970, 53% of housing permits were issued for single-family units compared to 76% in 1999 and 72% in 2000 (Nebraska Datebook). Nebraskans' increase in median salary means we are able and willing to build larger castles for ourselves. A 1997 report from the Department of Energy indicates that in the Midwest—West North Central region of the United States single family units compose 82% of the total housing units. In the nation as a whole, only 72% of housing units were single-family units.

These numbers become more significant in consideration of the number of persons per household. Nebraska's rate of 2.49 persons per household is slightly lower than the national average of 2.59. However, Nebraska's 2000 rate dropped from its 1990 rate of 2.54 persons per household, a 2% drop. Over the same ten years, the total number of households increased by 10.6%. All of these changes took place while Nebraskans were flocking to urban areas. In 1990, 66.1% of Nebraskans resided in urban areas, compared to slightly less than 50% at the midpoint of the 1900s (Nebraska Datebook). Finally, Nebraska's per capita residential energy consumption significantly surpasses that of the United States as a whole. In 1999, the U. S. averaged 65.3 million Btu per person compared to 75.9 Btu per Nebraska resident (Department of Energy). Today's air-conditioners, though much more efficient than those of only a decade ago, cool our homes everyday from the latter portions of spring to the early days of fall. Our increasingly efficient home heating units continue the energy consumption nearly

every day remaining on the calendar. Increased efficiency of our products means little if we use them with a greater frequency and constantly add new energy-consuming devices.

Nebraska's energy usage for transportation also demonstrates inefficiency problems. In 1999 the United States consumed an average of 93 million Btu per person for our total transportation appetite. Total transportation usage includes petroleum based motor fuel, aviation fuel, lubricants, ethanol, electricity and any other source used for transportation. In the same year, Nebraska averaged 113.6 million Btu per person for our total transportation wants and needs. As the Middle East continues its turbulent path, a dependence on fossil fuels, especially oil, correlates to rapidly fluctuating availability of our primary energy sources. Overall petroleum consumption also indicates excessive consumption by Nebraskans. Again in 1999 Nebraska averaged 21.3 million more Btu usage of petroleum for transportation needs than the national average (Department of Energy).

Nebraska's overall inefficiency in transportation related energy consumption has significantly increased over the past 40 years. Petroleum used only for motor gasoline in 1960 provided approximately 55.8 million Btu per Nebraskan compared to 62.4 million Btu per person in 1999. This 11.8% increase pales in comparison to the overall increase in transportation energy usage. As mentioned earlier, Nebraska's total transportation energy usage in 1999 averaged 113.6 million Btu per person—a significant increase over the 66.7 million Btu per person in 1960. This growth of 70.3% per person compounds in consideration of Nebraska's 21% population growth over the same period of time. A walk through a new car dealership would lead one to believe we are seriously and honestly concerned about our transportation energy efficiency. All of our new cars proudly display mileage statistics; however, we gloss over this information and move to horsepower options, acceleration ratios and color choices—especially the Husker(r) Red. Cars that surpass 50 miles per gallon are a hippie's choice, when the biggest and most powerful SUV in the neighborhood can take the kids to basketball practice in high society style.

These numbers correlate to three serious problems. First,

Nebraska is building more and larger single-family units. From 1960 to 2000, the median number of rooms in Nebraska housing units increased by one room per person (Nebraska Datebook). Over the same time, the percent of units with more than one person per room declined by 7.5%. Second, Nebraskans are building more single-family units, i.e. freestanding houses, in urban population areas. The effects of this geometric growth are clearly evident along West Dodge Street in Omaha. Urban sprawl has extended the borders of Omaha by many miles over the past two decades. Natural habitat and valuable farmland are becoming backyards. Though our population is increasingly urban, our overall population density is 57.3 persons per square mile lower than the national average (Census 2000). Third, transportation in Nebraska consumes a crucially increasing amount of energy, especially energy in the form of petroleum. Considering Nebraska has very little public transportation, increased travel correlates to a higher percentage of solo drivers per capita. As the distance from point A to point B grows, so does our dependence on other unstable, international locales that provide our oil needs.

Numbering the Responsible

Approximately 1,711,263 people are responsible for the energy inefficiency in Nebraska. Approximately 1,711,263 people reside in Nebraska (Census 2000). Each citizen of Nebraska personally and uniquely contributes to the excessive consumption of energy and each holds the keys to the solution. These keys open our homes and start our cars. Recycling two or three pounds of aluminum cans, though a baby-step in the right direction, does little when our castles sprawl over hundreds of thousands of acres. Buying a new automobile with increased gas mileage means little when we drive hundreds of extra miles simply because the new toy is “Fun to Drive.” Our capitalistic desires no longer drive us to “Keep up with the Joneses;” we now must be better than the Joneses.

Unfortunately, the Joneses of today are the Joneses of Hollywood. In our movies and sitcoms, we see families living in man-

sions, middle-class-working-heroes driving the most expensive SUV’s and children enjoying lives of luxury in suburban neighborhoods. Exposés of movie stars take us inside houses large enough for a small community-houses that are a home for only one person. Our collective inferiority complex propels us into bigger houses, faster cars, and compounded interest. To paraphrase a great president, “We have nothing to blame but ourselves.” We could blame Madison Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard for fueling our desires for the tangible measures of perceived success; however, we should blame ourselves for falling prey to our own infinite, impulsive and insatiable desires to have more than what we have.

We need to shift our entire culture. Lila De Silva describes the Buddha’s approach to fulfilling our needs: “Man must learn to satisfy his needs and not feed his greeds” (*Environmental Ethics* 257). Living according to this principle would drive us out of our multiple-thousand-square-foot homes and into more appropriate living quarters. This shift does not mean cardboard box shanty homes; it merely means ecologically intelligent domiciles. American society has consistently met the needs of nearly all of its citizens since the Great Depression. Even those who do not or cannot work can find a way to have their needs met. We continue to fear a replay of that Depression and our fear drives us to accumulate, accumulate, accumulate more, more, more. Each and every one of us could streamline his or her life and reduce his or her energy consumption. Of course, that accomplishment would require bold changes; and we are not a bold Nebraska, much less a bold America.

Bill McKibben puts our energy consumption in easy to understand terms:

In hunter-gather times it [energy consumption] was about 2,500 calories, all of it food. That is the intake of the common dolphin. A modern human being uses 31,000 calories a day, most of it in the form of fossil fuel. That is the intake of a pilot whale. And the average American uses six times that-as much as a sperm whale. (*Environmental Ethics* 303)

We have far surpassed a state in which we provide for our needs. Consider one need: food. An average Nebraskan (who lives in a food-rich location) can easily consume more energy in the excessive packaging and extraneous delivery of his or her food than the amount of energy the food would provide. We live in the age of excess, and countless generations to come will live in the age of the consequences.

We hold the keys to the future of our planet-our only known inhabitable place in an infinite universe. The keys of the future are prolonged intelligent and efficient energy use. An oil crisis twenty years ago did little to convince Nebraskans of our over-dependence on external sources. We cannot build one or two windmills and consider ourselves saviors of our environment. Our solutions must be long term, but more importantly, they must be personal. Every single citizen of our state must recognize his or her areas of over-consumption and find a way to remedy this problem.

So who is to blame? You are. I am. My neighbors are. Our governor is. We *all* are responsible and must be held accountable to our global community, to our national community, to our own community and, most importantly, to ourselves.

Fishing for Pride **Paula Theilen**

The sky was a bright blue hue and the water was crystal clear. It was a perfect day in Battle Lake, Minnesota, and my brother Travis and I were going to take advantage of it by heading out to the weed bed to fish for largemouth bass.

We settled ourselves in the rowboat, with Travis rowing and me sitting back and relaxing, of course. I knew it would be a quiet ride because my brother rarely has anything important to say to me. When he does talk to me, it's usually just to joke around and make me feel stupid. I was prepared to feel very ignorant by the end of this trip, since Travis is the big fisherman and I'm just his little sister who doesn't know anything.

We had close to one mile downshore to go, so I soaked up some sun and enjoyed the various sights and sounds. To my right was the shoreline, with a thick grove of trees that grew practically to the water's edge. Most of them were huge cottonwood trees, and it was the time of the year when they began spreading their seeds. Cottonwood trees have a wonderful way of transporting their seeds--they're attached to a bit of light, fluffy cotton that can travel for miles if caught in the right gust of wind. My brother and I were surrounded by soft, white cotton floating on the breeze above the water. They danced around us before gently landing on the water, barely disturbing the surface. The birds hidden in the lush, leafy vegetation of these trees were making quite a commotion. Their calls reminded me of the sounds one would hear wandering through the jungle. There were docks here and there, with paths leading from them into the trees where they wound up the hill to the houses somewhere on the other side.

Suddenly, we came to the edge of the trees and the beginning of a long string of houses with waterfront property. That's when I decided that I would live near a body of water someday. The thought of being able to look out my window at a beautiful expanse of water, walking outside to my own personal beach, or tying up my boat on a private dock was very appealing.

A splash on my left diverted my attention from the beautiful

houses on the shore to a series of ripples a few yards from our boat. I saw the creator of the ripples when a loon popped up quite a ways from us. The sun shone off of its black, slick feathers and the bright, white ring around its neck. It let out a loud, cackling laugh, as if letting us know we disturbed it, then started swimming away before diving back down under the surface.

As we got closer to the weed bed, the noise level rose. It was mostly just loons calling back and forth and splashing around. A lot of them had nests built on the water between clumps of the tall, skinny weeds. Several of the nests had eggs in them, and every time my brother and I came near to one, a whole ruckus erupted. The loons were obviously ticked off, and they wanted us and anything else around to know it.

Finally, we came to the farthest edge of the weed bed. Travis stopped rowing to rig up his line and I looked around while I waited. I couldn't believe how clear the water was and how well I could see everything that was going on below the surface. The water was only about 4 feet deep, so there wasn't much distance between me and the fish swimming below. There were tons of little sunfish darting here and there, catching the sunlight that shone through the water and causing little flashes of light. They didn't seem to care about us being there at all. There were quite a few little largemouth bass also, but they weren't as brave as the sunfish and would quickly turn around with a flip of their dark fins the instant they sensed us. Instead of reflecting the light the way the sunfish did, their movements imitated a wavy shadow, caused by the dark streaks on the top of their backs. I didn't spot any big bass yet, but I figured they were hiding in the weeds somewhere, waiting for an unsuspecting minnow to swim by.

Anxious now to get started, I grabbed my pole, dug around in the worm container for a big, juicy nightcrawler, and baited my hook with the squiggly thing. I gently tossed my line out into the water where it landed with a plop about five feet from our boat. The instant my worm entered the water, the small school of sunfish that was dawdling nearby spun around and dashed up to my squirming bait. Sunfish have got to be the most curious fish, because they just stared at my worm with their big, bulging eyes

and pecked at it occasionally. There were a few smaller bass that were with the sunfish, but they stayed back and let the sunfish check things out. They were either too shy or too smart to take the bait. One sunfish finally worked up some courage and decided to go for the whole worm. Like a flash he swam up to my bait, then was gone. All the other sunfish were left to stare stupidly at a shiny, bare hook. They gradually lost interest and continued on their way.

I was very aggravated. Now I had to rebait my hook because some stupid little fish outsmarted me. I reeled in my line, put another worm on, and cast it back out. The same thing happened again. I complained to my brother that the puny sunfish were stealing my bait while the bass never even get a chance. He told me to put my worm on differently, to thread the hook through it and leave the end dangling so it's more difficult for the fish to get away with the whole thing.

I took his advice and baited my hook the way he told me, with a little help from him. It did work better, but the sunfish still managed to clean off my hook; it just took them longer. I eventually did manage to catch one of the little creatures, however, but it was way too small to keep. Before attempting to take it off of the hook my brother warned me that it might pee on me. I just laughed because I had taken sunfish off of my line before and that had never happened.

I gently grabbed the fish with my thumb on one side of it and my other fingers on the opposite side. It was rather tricky to hold onto because it was very slimy, and I must have applied too much pressure, because while I was working the hook out of its mouth a tiny stream of liquid arched away from the fish and toward me. I cried out in disgust and pointed the thing away from me. Travis just laughed. I was all too glad to get the fish off the hook and back in the water.

Deciding that I had had enough of those pesky sunfish, I switched my bait from worms to minnows. I was ready to get serious now and catch some bass. I did manage to catch quite a few good-sized bass, as did Travis, and our basket of fish was rapidly getting full.

It wasn't until we neared the end of the weed bed that I saw exactly what I was looking for. A huge bass was hiding between a clump of the tall, slender weeds. The instant I spotted it I cried out to Travis to stop rowing the boat. He was almost as excited about it as I was. I desperately wanted to catch this fish. I'm not sure if I wanted to do it just to be able to say that I caught a huge fish, or if I wanted to impress by brother and my dad. Either way I was bound and determined to have that fish on the end of my line.

I quickly cast my line out past the fish so I wouldn't scare it away and slowly reeled it in until the minnow was directly in front of it. My brother was whispering advice to me, but I really wasn't listening. If I was going to catch this fish, I was going to catch it my way.

I anxiously waited with my fingers poised centimeters above the reel. I held my breath while I watched the bass, praying for it to take my bait. Wait. Wait. Be patient. No sudden movements. Come on, take it, just take it. Do your thing, minnow. A powerful swish of a tail, a dart forward, a strong tug on the line. Quick, set the hook! I got it! Now reel it in.

My reel was singing to me, my brother was shouting instructions because he thought I would lose it, and I was fighting to keep the fish out of the weeds. After a long duel, I finally won and pulled the fish close enough to the boat so that Travis could scoop it up in the net. I don't think I took a breath until that fish was safely inside the boat.

We headed back to the shore after that. I couldn't wait to show everybody what I had caught, especially my dad. I knew he would be impressed, and he was. I had finally found a way to form a strong connection with him. We weighed the fish before cleaning it-three pounds. It was probably the biggest bass anybody in our family had caught, and I was the one holding the record.

Before eating the fish that night, I made sure to remind everybody that I was the one who had caught it. It tasted great, probably due to the fact that I had added a dash of pride to the recipe.

You're Doin It All Wrong! **Holly Grasz**

There is a problem with my position on responding to terrorism. I really don't have a distinct one. I can agree with many of the opposing viewpoints that I have heard. However, to write an effective position paper on responding to terrorism, one really must have a position, so I will adopt the position that I support most.

War is not the answer to terrorism. Especially the terrorism that occurred on September 11th. And if you are going to use the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to justify war, you'd better give good reasons.

I am most certainly an antiwar pacifist, with a little bit of just war theorist thrown in for good measure. I rapidly tire of people who think that large-scale terrorist violence **must** be answered with large-scale military violence. I belong to an online message board, and the September 11th terrorist attacks have spawned many heated discussions. Too many times I've heard: "This is the only way to stop them," "We gotta do **something**," "We can't just let them get away with this," ad nauseum.

Let's start with "We gotta do something" and "We can't just let them get away with this," shall we? To me, this stinks of revenge. I can think of a group of people who use revenge almost exclusively as a response to aggression. They are called children. Children respond to everything emotionally, as most of them have not learned the concept of rational thinking. When it comes to responding to someone that hurts them, they usually don't think a whole lot about what consequences will follow. They think of how good it will feel to get back at the person or thing that hurt them.

We should not respond to terrorism with emotion clouding our thoughts. Jessica Stern reports that "Nearly 90 percent of those surveyed supported taking military action against those responsible even if it led to war, according to a Washington Post poll taken on the night of Sept. 11."

There is nothing wrong with the anger and hurt we are feeling. I would worry about someone who **wasn't** feeling these emotions. Even I wanted to hurt those responsible. Part of me still does. But

emotion must be set aside when we respond to terrorism. We must look at the bigger picture. How will *they* respond to what we do?

Let me put it this way. We all know the old concept *Eye for an eye*. So what happens after we pluck out the enemy's eye? Does any one honestly believe that he's just going to sit there and look at us with the eye he has left, grin sheepishly and walk off? He's going to be reaching for the eye we have left, and he might go after our neck as well. I firmly believe the newer *Eye for an eye makes the whole world blind*.

Then there is the "This is the only way to stop them", re-sponse. My initial reaction to this nonsense usually amounts to "It soo is **NOT!!!** How long did the President give the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden? Three weeks? That isn't much time to think over other viable options, particularly ones that don't involve noncombatant casualties. James Sterba writes "In fact, the tendency of modern wars has been to produce higher and higher proportions of noncombatant casualties, making it more and more difficult to justify participation in such wars," (537). Well, I'm sure the US can find a way to justify this war. We should just modify "This is the only way" to "This is the only way we could come up with on short notice. Hey, we don't plan for this kind of stuff."

We **should** have planned. The US should have seen this coming. We've been imposing sanctions and bombing independent countries for a long time, and we are just now seeing a response. We need to think about how we appear to the rest of the world. Our bias in the Palestine/Israel conflict is a prime example:

Seen through Muslim eyes, it is a conflict prolonged by America's bias towards Israel. Muslims do not comprehend, for example, how the United States, which gives Israel more than \$3 billion annually, could not have stopped Israel from allowing more than 200,000 Jewish settlers...to move into occupied territory Palestinians have envisioned as their homeland, (Murphy).

But perhaps the most irritating aspect of these attacks is the way they happened. Why in the world were passengers allowed to carry box cutters onto a plane? Domestic defense is the key to

preventing terrorism. I'm perfectly willing to give up some of my luxuries to protect my country. Note I said *luxuries*, not *freedoms*. Short lines at the airport are a luxury. Living to make that flight is a freedom. I will not give up what I am trying to protect.

There are people who try to sway me by appealing to the feminist in me. They always say something to the effect of "I can't believe you would support the Taliban, after what they do to women." First off, I don't support the Taliban. They disgust me. But they are entitled to fairness, as they are some (low) form of human. It's all a part of that rational vs. revenge thing. And bombing Afghans certainly isn't liberating them from oppression. Maybe I'm crazy, but to me, when you kill someone, you aren't helping her live a free life.

There are generally two extremely similar responses to this argument. "Those people are collateral damage." or "We aren't trying to hurt them, it just happens that way." Tell that to the folks that were literally liquefied by tons of concrete falling from the World Trade Center. They were collateral damage too. I'm pretty sure that an Afghani bleeds just as red as I do. And the difference between intended and foreseen harm means nothing to me. If you knew that people were going to die as the result of your action, and you did it anyway, you intended to hurt them.

It's easy for me to say "You're doin it all wrong!" without giving my own option. The only one that comes to mind is Special Operations, used exclusively. Aren't we supposed to have great Seals and Rangers? Send them in to extract the threat. It's intricate, but it is exact. Casualties are minimal. In this case, I'm utilitarian, but without the calculus. War, which harms noncombatants, or Special Ops, which harms few to zero noncombatants. It wouldn't be easy, but neither is war. I know that it's sketchy, but at least I can say that I gave some thought to an option other than "Bomb them!"

Terrorism is evil; I accept that. But I **cannot** accept reacting in kind. I refuse to drop to that level of cowardice and ignorance. We need to stop using the American's quick fix in violence, but rather, ask ourselves "How can we keep this from happening again?" War doesn't deter violence; it catalyzes it.

I am concerned about a better world. I'm concerned about justice. I'm concerned about brotherhood. I'm concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about these, he can never advocate violence. For through violence you may murder a murderer but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar but you can't establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that. And I say to you, I have also decided to stick to love. For I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Mother Goose **Jess Kennedy**

Flawless, sun-kissed skin, waist-length hair, full and golden, recently manicured nails, and a spirit as fresh and new and clean as everything else, the perfect female form inside and out. Glancing in the rearview mirror the image is slaughtered. Pasty, white, blemished skin jumps back at me and reveals the cold hard truth. I am not flawless, I am not beautiful, and I am not a woman. I stare and wonder, “That’s not really how people see me, is it?”

A car whizzes by. I look up and for a moment and am frightened. How long have I been looking in the mirror and not the road? Reality sets in again. I tell myself, “Someday I will be able to look in a mirror, someday I’ll be beautiful, someday I’ll love you.” My biggest fear is that the illusion in my head of who I am will never change into something real, that, when I’m ninety, I’ll still be feeble, still be hoping, praying, begging -- and most depressing of all, still be a man. “Think of it later, girl. Worry about it another time.”

So many things others take for granted cause great tribulation and suffering for me. When I am too weak and I have to break down and use a public restroom a piece of me cries, “No, God. Please.” I pass under the sign that reaffirms my worst fears; it seems to laugh at me and say, “I knew you’d be back. Boy.” I get in and out as quickly as possible reassuring myself again this too will pass and give the Someday speech again. I’ve practiced it so many times its perfect now and I’m even starting to convince myself. “Girl, it’s me. I would not lie to *me*.”

Boys and girls, women and men, ladies and gentlemen- it’s everywhere! Can’t I go one day, one hour without being tormented by signs or speech that have such narrow restrictions on humanity? You are female or male, that’s it. They say this but it’s not true. It’s not. Countless times in school I wanted to stand up and say, “No, I won’t get in the boy’s line, Mrs. Doe.” So many times I longed to do what the girls got to, to say, “Hey look at me! I’m a girl too! Don’t leave me, please!”

Where could I escape? Even Mother Goose declared there was no salvation for me. “You’re a boy. And what are little boys

made of, made of? What are little boys made of? Snips and snails, and puppy dogs tails; And that's what little boys are made of, made of. Now, what are little girls made of, made of? Answer me! What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice and all that's nice; And that's what little girls are made of. And that's not you -- you're not sweet. You are rotten to the core! You're bad. You are a bad boy."

After school I thought it would be different; it wasn't. I go to pay for gas, groceries, whatever and it never fails- the clerk does not talk to me or even look at me until I start to walk away then the words that make me cringe- "Thank you, sir." It's not bad enough to dehumanize me by not talking or making eye contact during our entire transaction, there has to be one last fatal blow -- sir, sir, sir, sir. I want to twirl around and fire back witty insults to make them feel as degraded as I do, but I leave broken. "Think about it later. Worry about it another time."

One place of sanctuary I thought I could find was the church; not so. I couldn't even count how many times I've gone to a service and been told people like me will burn. At one such service the pastor said he was going to stray from his message because he felt there was, "... someone in our midst that needs help." He went on and on about turning back to the right path. The path that is not only narrow, but straight. The stares are worse though. What is it, why are they staring? You tell yourself it's them or it's their problem, but still never wholly believe it. Well, at the very least I can find acceptance and love within myself. "No you can't, nor will you ever," I hear a voice from inside say. "Quiet! I'll think of that later."

Writing Essays: No Easy Task Steve Schrieber

Does anybody really like writing essays? For most people the answer is NO! It's just another obstacle to overcome in some class, for some teacher, for some grade. With all the thoughts that pass through a person's head in one day you think there'd be plenty to write about. Not exactly. Everybody always has an opinion on anything and everything. However, not enough of an opinion to ramble on about it for pages and pages until they've turned blue in the face. This is what makes writing an essay challenging. You have to feel overwhelmingly strong about an issue or just love to write. Unfortunately writing is not my specialty and at this time I have no issues to get worked up about.

You may be wondering why I'm writing an essay if I despise them so much and don't have to. Well, I do have to if I want to pass this class anyways. This paper is for my English composition class at Wayne state college in Wayne, Nebraska. Dr. Ronnow has assigned us a 600-page essay due today. Complete with two quotes and a works cited. I'll be lucky to get 300 words out of this essay. Especially since there is nothing on my mind, at the moment...

One problem with writing essays are all the rules attached to them some rules are good like putting periods at the end of sentences to complete a thought or capitalizing important words like Wayne and Nebraska. But a lot of rules are silly and unnecessary. Like Zinsser William said, "simplify, simplify"(77). I'm sure there are over ten grammatical errors in my paper right now, but I don't care. As long as the reader understands the point I'm trying to get across. Writing should be expressive and unique, free from the stranglehold of rules and structure. Who's to decide how many sentences I have to have in this paragraph to make it complete?

Last night I began the quest for an idea or topic to write about. After putting it off for a week or two a problem had presented itself. At the last minute I had nothing to write about. Nothing even worth mentioning. Dr. Ronnow had given us a book of essays to generate some ideas for our own essays. I decided to give it a try. The Familiar Essays compiled by Mark Christensen.

Here we go. By the way, Dr. Gabriel Robins in his own frantic search for quotes used Wernher Von Braun's saying, "Research is what I'm doing when I don't know what I'm doing." A little off the subject but I needed another quote. Anyways, after reading through each of the entire fifty-five essays I still had nothing to write about and it was 1:00 a.m. Did panic set in? No. I calmly sat back and thought about everything from childhood experiences to the War of 1812. 3:00 a.m. Still nothing to write about. Time to go to bed.

Now here I am writing an essay about nothing, wondering why I'm even taking this class. I have already passed an English Composition class at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Nebraska. A much harder class in my opinion called "The Odyssey." It consisted of three classes in one and consumed roughly seven hours of class a week. With hard work and persistence I managed to get a passing C-. But here at Wayne State an accomplished scholar must receive a C in order to pass the course. So the credit didn't transfer. @#%! Who's to decide that a C- at Midland is not equal to or greater than a C at Wayne State? Apparently the head of the English Department, who had no intention of looking into the situation and was just plain stubborn and stupid. Well I guess I did have something to get worked about after all.

So now after writing until I've turned blue in the face, it's time to end this nonstop rambling on about nothing. Unfortunately there was actually stuff to write about and things worth mentioning. I'm going to leave this conclusion short of a full paragraph just for the sake of it and end this essay at over 700 words hoping that I pass this class with run-on sentences, sentence fragments and tons of other grammatical errors.

Works Cited

- Zinsser, William. "Clutter." *The Familiar Essays*. Ed. Mark Christiansen. New York: Thomson Learning, 2002. 74-77.
- Robins, Dr. Gabriel. 22 Jan. 2002. Home page. 8 Feb. 2002<<http://cs.virginia.edu/robins/quotes.html>>.