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Featured Works

Essays from English 53: Reading, Reasoning, and Writing

ENGL53 (Reading, Reasoning, and Writing) is a new course offered through the Bakersfield College English Department. English 53 prepares students, who are eligible for either English 60 or English 50, for English 1a. The following works were submitted by ENGL53 students.

“Considering Lane Splitting” Dakota Hall	50
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Works from English 41A: Introduction to Creative Writing

ENGL 41A requires students to write poetry, short plays, and prose forms. The course emphasizes creativity and control of language, sound, imagery and sense in poetry, as well as character, plot, theme, and point of view in drama and fiction. These works are from the Spring 2014 ENGL 41A class.

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Articles

Venezuela: The Reality Reflected Into Fiction

Stephanie Avendano

Stephanie Avendano is a student from Venezuela who has been living in the United States since January 2014. Her major is Electrical Engineering. This work is a way for her to inform people about the terrible situation in Venezuela, and it shows how these problems have impacted her life. This paper was nominated by Professor Rae Ann Kumelos.

Has anyone ever thought about what would happen if the world, or their world, falls apart? Many people believe in science fiction as non-true stories. When somebody watches a horror movie with an apocalyptic topic, they might say, "it is just a movie" but I know that they can in some way turn into reality. Dystopia, an imagined state of mind or place in which everything is terrible, embraces almost perfectly the description of the situation in which my country is living. Venezuela, a country located in South America, a place where I have come from, was for me a matchless place in the world. It used to be a Utopian world for me, which means that everything was perfect. Now, it is a miserable and wretched nation because of the government. I believe that science fiction stories and characters are made these days not only to entertain, but also to show people what is really happening outside their bubble and outside of their daily lives; the reality that was shown to me through these fantasy worlds was the appalling situation in Venezuela.

There are many science fiction stories that could be associated to the real world. One of the most fascinating and captivating tales is *The Hunger Games* saga. Suzanne Collins, the author of the best-selling collection, discusses a country that has been living in a dictatorship for many years. As a result, many hungry people live without freedom of speech. Similarly, in Venezuela, people have been living in a concealed dictatorship for fifteen years, in which little by little the government has been trying to change the way people live, changing from knowledgeable people to resigned people--basically, a "zombie-like society." Consequently, now Venezuelans live with no self-government, no jobs, no food, and no freedom. Since 2002, all the problems in Venezuela have been increasing. All the young people graduated are having trouble finding jobs in their own careers, and the jobs that they found are not well paid. This has led to people becoming poor, not to mention the lack of food. Just as in District Twelve of *The Hunger Games* trilogy, also in Venezuela citizens are being treated with cruelty and are being oppressed by a corrupt management that over time, has led the population to scarcity.

Zombies, vampires and mythical creatures live in the actual world. They represent for each person what the imagination and situation shows them. Zombies for me represent in reality all

the difficulties that frame societies. In Venezuela, it embodies people, the citizens. Vampires characterize in this occasion the ones that take advantage of the system. In Venezuela's instance, vampires exemplify the government. However, it is true that every position is seen by each person differently. The same time a thief steals a purse from a woman walking, we find two faces of the same coin: What for the stolen woman is a disgrace, to the thief it may represent the meal of the day. In the same way, I see the status of Venezuela. While half of the population starves in their homes and remains quiet, obeying the government like zombies, the other half stays in the administration because it means to have money for everything without caring for the rest. Clearly, fictional stories are based in certain circumstances that are going around our world.

This total disorder has caused many Venezuelans to migrate to the United States, Europe, Middle East, and other countries. Just like in "The Ones Who Walked Away from Omelas," a short story written by Ursula LeGuin, "Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back." My parents and I moved to the United States in January 2014. I am feeling homeless now, although I have a house. There is such an enormous difference between living in my hometown and living in a foreign country. Occasionally, it just looks like the only way to resolve the problem is to go back. However, I went to visit my family in Venezuela a few months ago and as it is said by Kavita Sreedhar in her essay called, "Travelling Home," "all of that past seemed to have vanished" (68). These words explain precisely what I felt when I saw how the society was shaping Venezuela. I felt uncanny. As defined by Freud in "Raising the Dead: Unearthing the Non-literary Origins of Zombie Cinema," "uncanny" is when the familiar becomes unfamiliar (qtd in. Bishop, 465). I saw people living their lives without caring about what was happening around them. My friends, my external family, the entire country suddenly changed. Because of that, I have learned that "home is where the heart is" (Sreedhar, 69), and for me, that is what is more essential. The horror writer Stephen King explains in his essay, "The Symbolic Language of Dreams" that it depends on each of us to either clean up the pile in our brain to remember memories from the past or just leave it in there (9). I think that involuntarily, my mind hid that part of me that had suffered for so long about Venezuela, since I do not remember a lot of what happened in the past.

Magic novels, fictional short stories, films, and all kinds of movies and literature, are produced these days to distract and entertain, but also are generated to demonstrate to people what is certainly happening in the world that surround them. The truth that was revealed to me through these imaginary existences was the atrocious state in Venezuela. If I need to answer the introductory question about whether I have imagined what would happen if the world or my world falls apart, well yes, my world did fall apart, and I had never thought about it. I never knew

how I would react because I had not imagined it. Nobody knows how they will respond to life's obstacles until they are facing them. My Venezuela, my utopian world, was destroyed. As is usually said in life, not everything is perfect. There is never a utopia without a dystopia. After everything happened, I just need to say that I would not change my story. However, I will always have my own imaginary world. If that is the only way I can find peace, a Venezuela without problems, and a place that I can call home, my Utopian world will become a real one in my imagination.

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Dignity: The Energy Propelling Success

Lester S. Carcamo

Lester S. Carcamo began studying at Bakersfield College in Fall 2009. He enrolled wanting to earn an Associates Degree in Geology, but he has progressed in studying English, and has added English as a second major. Writing provided a medium for Lester to make his ideas tangible because in print his ideas take material shape. He was born in Guatemala during a time of undeclared civil war. As an adolescent, Lester witnessed how military offensive and defensive actions obliterated human rights. Those experiences provided the background for his appreciation of dignity. Lester is a father of a family and works full time.

A person receives energy from dignity because it enables the person to live a meaningful life. The feeling of dignity produces an energizing effect quite similar to kinetic energy. In a car, kinetic energy moves the vehicle from standstill position to cruising speeds. Dignity is the source of personal inner energy, and it influences behavior. During the course of a person's life, intensity of dignity feeling varies up and down with peaks and valleys. When dignity is at its peak, a person experiences confidence, but when dignity is low, the behavioral response may set on two opposite extremes. With low dignity, a person may land in depression, or on the opposite, a person may engage in a crusade to regain confidence. Laura Hillenbrand in her book *Unbroken* narrates the true-life story of Olympic competitor and World War II survivor Louie Zamparini. Through his life, Louie's feeling of dignity influenced his actions. When his sense of dignity was high, Louie achieved great feats as when he secured a position to attend the Olympic Games. In contrast, when his dignity was low, Louie took a two-road path of action. In one path of action, depression consumed Louie, and in the other, he crusaded to recover dignity. In that sense, a person's vitality correlates directly with feelings of dignity.

Correlation describes how variables relate with each other, and the relationship produces an observable behavior. Sherri Jackson in her book *Research Methods and Statistics* defines that positive correlation happens when two variables increase at the same time. On the opposite, negative relationship indicates how one variable increases while the other variable decreases (16). The relationship between temperature and altitude is negative because as altitude increases temperature decreases. Positive correlation occurs when driving a car because the vehicle's speed increases with relation to the driver's depression of accelerator pedal; as such, a gas pedal positioned at maximum corresponds to high speed.

Speed characterized Louie's athletic days because he ran fast at track and field competitions. Hillenbrand indicates, "But Louie was already the fastest High School miler [running a one mile

length track] in American history, and he was improving so rapidly that he had lopped forty-two seconds off his time in two years" (21). When running, Louie utilized his inner strength to propel his strides faster and faster. In 1936, Louie competed in New York City to earn a position for the 1936 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany. People at the New York stadium cheered in Louie's favor, and in direct response, he ran faster. In Louie's hometown Torrance, California, his neighbors and friends gathered around the radio listening to the competition's broadcast, and they expected Louie to win. At his home, Louie's mother busily attended neighbors who cheered at the radio's broadcast. The positive reinforcement provided by stadium observers, friends, and family enhanced Louie's performance. Consequently, Louie's inner drive responded in positive correlation with encouragement.

Dignity is not something material. In the entire history of humanity, no one has ever paid a utilities bill for dignity wired or piped into a home. Neither, has anyone ever gone to a restaurant and ordered a dish of dignity with tomato sauce. On the same token, dignity has no defined place in the human body. No one has ever complained of having a splint in the dignity muscle, or a broken dignity bone. Besides its lack of weight, mass, and volume: dignity is real, and it can be enhanced, reduced, and lost.

International laws recognize and protect dignity. Sara Ramey, in her essay "Fighting for a Society That Respects Each Person's Dignity" indicates that after the global catastrophe and horrors that many people lived during World War II (WWII) the United Nations Organization (UN) accorded a unified expression of rights to which all humans are entitled. As a result, on 10 December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enacted that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Just a few months later, nations that did not participate in the UN accord ratified the right of all people to freedom and dignity in the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (54). Those two international events provide the legal basis acknowledging the existence of dignity, so in a legal sense, before and during WWII dignity existed, but it was ignored.

There are obligations that occur with the capability of dignity. Johannes Giesinger in his article "Kant on Dignity and Education" shows that initial dignity makes humans higher than all other species in nature. Hereafter, once realized, dignity sets people with two obligations; first, each person must support their own dignity; and second, every person is morally accountable of giving dignity to others (611). Multiple social mechanisms happen because of the two-fold situation. First, the obligation of supporting self-dignity recruits all persons to seek dignity; second, giving dignity to others place every person with the obligation of treating others with respect. Persons who break either rule may experience weakened dignity.

At school, during early adolescence, other students damaged Louie's dignity. Hillenbrand denotes, "He [Louie] was a marked boy. Bullies, drawn by his oddity and hoping to goad him into uttering Italian curses, pelted him with rocks, taunted him, punched him, and kicked him. He tried buying their mercy with his lunch, but they pummeled him anyway, leaving him bloody" (9). Violence is purposely not treating another person with dignity. In his own body, Louie suffered pain inflicted by others. At that moment, the abuse and pain lowered Louie's dignity feeling.

Low dignity feeling produces either depression or engagement to regain dignity. Louie discarded depression, and he engaged in activities to recuperate his dignity. Hillenbrand reveals, "Frustrated at his inability to defend himself, he made a study of it. His father taught him how to work a punching bag and made him a barbell from two lead-filled coffee cans welded to a pipe. The next time a bully came at Louie, he ducked left and swung his right fist straight into the boy's mouth. The bully shrieked, his tooth broken, and fled" (9). The response of self-defense seemed to work in Louie's case. After that second confrontation, the bullies no longer molested Louie. The feeling of low dignity motivated Louie to learn self-defense techniques. On that perspective, as a variable, dignity was low, and Louie's energy, as a second variable, went high. In this instance, there was a negative correlation between dignity feeling and energy because one variable decreased -dignity feeling-, and the decrease, drove the second variable -energy level- to high.

Historic events illustrate how nations apply high levels of energy as a response to recover dignity. The United States of America entered World War II using the model of high energy in direct correlation of low dignity. Richard Overy in his book *New York Times: Complete World War II 1939-1945 All the Coverage from All the Battlefields to the Home Front* points that on 7 December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and other places. The next day President Roosevelt addressed Congress and the Nation by declaring war against Japan. President Franklin D. Roosevelt characterized Japan's actions as an infamy (77). Many American people died during Japan's attack. As such, due to Japan's military strike, the United States national feeling of dignity became low. The war declaration motivated thousands of Americans to voluntarily enlist in the military service. Other people who were not fit for military service approved and supported the war. Even homemakers participated in the war effort by working at military equipment factories. The nation's response of low dignity feeling produced high levels of energy.

Regaining dignity through using high energy is possible in a positive way. Susan Hill and Toni Tollerud in their essay "Restoring Dignity in At-Risk Students" points out, "In the Model for Dignity Enhancement, the counselor establishes a relationship of unconditional caring and

respect. The model enables a change process, during which basic needs are met as dignity is enhanced. This positive environment is established by the counselor and consists of such factors as trust, affirmation, flexibility, clear expectations and consequences, acceptance of individual differences, and fairness" (128). The described method utilizes professional therapy. A professional counselor dispenses the therapy to a person whose dignity feeling is low. The person needs to reach outside of his or her own resources for help. Extending oneself in seeking help requires high energy, yet the person does not use the high energy in violent means. As such, regaining dignity is possible in multiple ways other than violence.

American aviators detained in Russia regained dignity through practicing sports. George Larson in his article "American Airmen Held as POWs in Far East Russia during World War II reveals, "[I]nterned Americans totaled 101 airmen. The Americans upgraded the internment camp with baseball diamonds, along with basketball and volleyball courts. Supplies arrived from the American Embassy in Moscow, including English reading materials and a radio" (30). Russia had not declared war against Japan. The American aviators who landed in Russian territory were either on route or on returning from attacking Japanese occupied territories in China. Due to political constraints, Russia detained the Americans as prisoners of war (POWs). The Americans lost their freedom. Lack of freedom damages dignity. Russia's interest rested on learning the technology used in American airplanes and equipment. Russians did not use forced interrogations and cruelty; instead, Russians allowed Americans to carry on with life as usual, yet Americans were not allowed to leave. Detainees' dignity suffered the loss of personal freedom, so they opted to regain dignity by means of playing sports.

Engagement in sports provides a path to use high energy sourced from low dignity. Louie engaged in running track and field to compensate for his low dignity feelings. Hillenbrand indicates, "Louie was never more than an inch from juvenile hall or jail, and as a serial troublemaker, a failing student, and a suspected Italian, he was just the sort of rogue that eugenicists wanted to cull. Suddenly understanding that he was risking, he felt deeply shaken" (12). Louie was the local rascal in Torrance, California. The feeling of being a candidate for eugenics humiliated Louie's dignity because eugenics labelled persons as physically defective to live in society. Moreover, eugenics treatments were painful because they encompassed sterilization, segregation, and institutionalization. Louie trembled in fear of receiving one of those treatments, and his dignity feeling turned low. Louie decided to improve, and he elected sports to prove his worth. He began practicing track and field sports, and he started winning one competition after the other. Constructively, the distress of feeling fear led to Louie's realization of needing to change. Without that fear, Louie may have never reached success in sports. In Louie, the scare of eugenics resulted from a perceived obstruction to his interest of living a normal life.

Perceived obstruction of personal interest leads to damaged dignity. Timothy Murphy in his paper "Dignity, Marriage and Embryo Adoption: A Look at Dignitas Personae" declares, "The capacity for experience of states of pain and pleasure -is a necessary condition for having interests" (862). Interest links to dignity in the sense that all humans share the ability of experiencing pain or pleasure. Therefore, persons dislike pain, and they enjoy pleasure. The dislike of pain is illustrated by how people, by implicit knowledge, identify threats that may induce pain, and they shy away from distressing situations. Therefore, unnecessary induction of pain degrades a person's dignity. Even the perceived idea that something may cause pain degrades dignity. In Louie's case, eugenics did not cause any direct pain, but he felt violation of his dignity by the apparent pain that eugenics may cause.

Louie's career in life continued beyond his Olympic Games adventure. Youthful energy and historical circumstances landed Louie as crewmember of a military airplane in WWII. His crew patrolled the Pacific Ocean in defense of America against Japanese forces. Hillenbrand tells, "At four-thirty A.M. Green Hornet was declared missing" (131). Louie operated the bomber controls of the B-24 airplane nicknamed *Green Hornet*. Due to mechanical problems, the *Green Hornet* crashed into the shark-infested waters of the equatorial Pacific Ocean. Louie and two other comrades survived the crash. Because of starvation, lack of water, and exposure to the elements, one of his teammates died after a few days. Louie and the second survivor drifted over the Pacific Ocean for over 40 days. His dignity seemed reinvigorated by every problem lived while adrift, yet his body suffered due to inadequate nourishment. Lack of water and food never broke Louie's spirit. Capture by Japanese forces marked the last day of Louie's oceanic suffering. Imprisonment in Japan's POW camp tested his resolution and strength of spirit beyond the suffering encountered while adrift in the Pacific Ocean.

During WWII, the Japanese Imperial Army through the usage of ferocious military tactics established positions abroad and defended Japan. There were several territories occupied by Japan, and in defense of their own interest, Japanese soldiers performed brutalities; acts that maltreated and killed thousands of people. Jonathan Watts brings about historical evidence in his essay "Victims of Japan's Notorious Unit 731 Sue" pointing out, "Japanese planes flew low over their villages [Ningbo, China] and dropped containers of flea-infested wheat and rice.... A former Unit 731 pilot said [that] he dropped fleas near Hagzhoue [China] in 1940 and Nanking [China] in 1941. The fleas were infected with cholera, typhoid, and bubonic plague" (628). As a result, due to the sicknesses, thousands of Chinese nationals died. The diseases established in those regions. Up to the year 2005, sicknesses were not fully eradicated. The lawsuit seeks compensation to 108 survivors, and repayment to China due to incurred medical expenses for over 65 years. In the war days, the passion motivating Japanese military actions blinded judgment regarding consideration of their immediate actions and long lasting repercussions.

During reclusion in Japanese detention camps, Louie and many other prisoners of war lived uncanny punishment. Hillenbrand reveals, "The slave labor at Noaetsu [POW camp] was the kind of work that swallowed men's souls, but the prisoners found ways to score little victories, so essential to their physical emotional survival (284). In the POW camps, Japanese guards considered themselves as avengers of national pride. Their actions were charged with blinding passion similar to that blinding passion in the pilots who dropped flea bombs over china. Without judgment by rage, many Japanese soldiers discarded reasoning and regard for other people's dignity. When actions contrast against reasoning, a person's dignity goes low because it breaks the rule of treating others with respect. As previously indicated, when dignity is low, the person experiences either depression or high energy. Very few Japanese guards treated POWs with kindness, but majority of other guards treated POWs with brutality; fueled by acting without dignity.

Louie's experience as a POW was plagued with suffering because a Japanese prison guard took special interest in bullying Louie. Several times a day, during several months, the guard physically abused Louie through repeated salvage strikes and scornful acts. Hillenbrand describes Louie's state of mind during one beating, "He [Louie] felt his consciousness slipping, his mind losing adhesion, until all he knew was a single thought: he [the Japanese guard] cannot break me" (296). Louie never surrender, and he resisted. Despite being in captivity and continuous physical abuses, his dignity feeling was strong, yet his body felt frail and weaken. While cruising through adversity, Louie gained energy from dignity, so he had a strong will to live.

World War II ended. Louie regained his freedom, and he returned to America enjoying good health. In Torrance, California, Louie's mother, family, and friends welcomed his return. People who a few years back cheered for his sports winnings were now praising his return. Details of Louie's story filled the pages of newspaper across the nation. Laura Hillenbrand in her book *Unbroken* compiled her research from those newspaper records, other sources, and personal interviews with Louie himself. Now in the news there are announcements of an upcoming movie. The memories of Louie are now a treasure of history and a worthy role model to upcoming generations.

Dignity feeling proved essential to Louie's survival from school bullies, from eugenics, from being adrift over the Pacific Ocean, and from indecent Japanese prison guards. The United States regained its national dignity by winning World War II. Dignity is now recognized worldwide as human right. The axis of dignity resides on recognizing oneself and others interests. On the entire planet, from north to south, on a daily basis, people seek their own dignity, and people provide dignity to others by treating others with respect. The energy that

either low or high dignity feeling produces drive people to seek a happy life. Oddly, one may wish that cars could run on dignity.

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Utopia vs. Dystopia

Kyle Millwee

Kyle Millwee is an eighteen year old graduate of Shafter High School who is in his first year at Bakersfield College. He is also a freelance sports writer for Bakersfield Californian and Shafter Press. This paper was nominated by Professor Rae Ann Kumelos.

Fox has come out with a new reality TV show called "Utopia" which is about fifteen strangers who try to make a community in a remote location in which they can thrive together (Hinckley). Just from seeing the trailer and commercials it is obvious that the strangers will not always get along and that there will be lots of disagreements, making this place something far from a utopian society. After all, a utopia is a place where everything is perfect, meaning that there can be no sin, sickness, corruption or anything that is bad. Therefore, since there will be sin in every society, as it is in the nature of man, no society will be perfect. But wait, according to Ursula Le Guin, author of the short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," a utopia is "as you like it" not necessarily a "perfect" world just a world that is perfect in an individual's eyes. Let's take a look at the ideas of utopia and dystopia from a Christian perspective, also considering current world events and pop culture.

Le Guin describes her utopian town of Omelas as a happy place indeed, but her definition of happiness is intriguing. Le Guin says, "Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive." Happiness is vital to a utopia, and from looking at her definition of happiness, it is rather obvious that different individuals will need to venture into all three of these categories of happiness to try to find their own, personal utopia. The musical artist Kid Cudi in his song, "Pursuit of Happiness," sings about getting to the "happy" state by getting as high and drunk as he can. Le Guin mentions in her short story that there is a drug called drooze "for those who like it." Going to the Bible, Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (NIV Bible). For a Christian, happiness comes from having a relationship with God. This happiness, however, isn't some kind of short-lived euphoria. It is a joy and a feeling of contentment from within that is not fazed by outer circumstances, says Greg Laurie, pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship and award-winning author, evangelist, and public speaker.

The opposite of a utopia is a dystopia. It is an "uncanny" place that is unfamiliar and far from home (Bishop, 465). Think of a place full of hate and fear; make it a society, and bam, dystopia. In West Africa the Ebola outbreak has killed thousands now (Kuhnenn). Like cancer, there is no cure for it. But unlike cancer, it can be spread to others, and that is exactly what it has been

doing (Kuhnhen). In fact, it has been getting so bad that President Obama is now viewing it as a potential threat to global security and is sending troops to try to help contain the outbreak (Kuhnhen). No doubt the people living in these West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea are faced with a dystopian world full of fear, sickness, pain, and paranoia. If Ebola cannot be contained and ends up spreading worldwide, we could be in for something that is apocalypse-esque and portrays what the majority of people would think of as a stereo-typical dystopia. In Lynn Venable's "Time Enough At Last," a character named Henry Bemis is the only one to survive what appears to be the dropping of an atomic bomb. Bemis has always wanted to be able to sit down and read a book without anything stopping him from doing it, and now he finally has the chance (Venable). Bemis finds a utopia where most people would find a dystopia. I guess the saying really does ring true that one man's trash is another man's treasure.

Later in Le Guin's story it is revealed that a young child is locked in a dark basement somewhere in the town and can never come out. If the child were to come out, Omelas would cease to be a utopia. This sacrificial child immediately made me think of (and a classmate mentioned it once during class discussion), Jesus Christ. The child in Omelas must suffer so everyone else can live a perfect life, much like Jesus sacrificed Himself when He died on the cross and then rose from the dead three days later to conquer sin and death and to pave a way for us to one day live in the only utopia that exists, which is heaven.

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Literary Criticism

Joy That Kills

Josie Burns

Josie is in her second year as an English major at Bakersfield College. Her career path is yet to be decided, but she hopes to remain in the field of literature. She has dreams of one day becoming SciFi/fantasy short story author, but will strive to become a fiction editor for now. This paper was nominated by Professor Brad Stiles

When Louise Mallard hears of her husband's death in Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," she immediately reacts with sobbing grief; however, this grief does not seem to last long. Once she locks herself in her room upstairs and sits in a chair in front of an open window, she begins to feel as if something were coming for her from outside. The open window could easily signify freedom. The events taking place outside are described in such simple and ordinary ways, yet they make the world sound so inviting. "The delicious breath of rain was in the air... The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. . . She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will" (Chopin 278). This seems to be when she realizes what the death of her husband really means for her; she is free.

Once she accepts that this feeling coming for her is a sense of freedom she quickly becomes overjoyed. She would not let herself stop to think about what these feelings could mean and whether or not they were disrespectful to her so very recently deceased husband. Louise feels her freedom in the knowledge that these next years will "be her own" (279). She does admit that her husband "had never looked save with love upon her;" however, she also reveals that her husband would often bend her will to his own (279). This would be considered common knowledge among marriages during this time; however, Louise has just been freed from this oppression. Her life has become completely her own again.

One view of the relationship between Mrs. Mallard and her husband could be that of the average marriage during the late 1800's which consisted of the "good wife." Louise had more than likely been raised to always please her husband and do as he asked. This does not always lead to a happy life for the wife. Louise even admits in the story that "she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not" (279). The death of her husband truly freed her from the bonds of what may have been an unhappy marriage, for her at least. She even admitted that "only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long" (279). This was not a happy woman.

This new sense of freedom hits her quickly. Just a short while after learning of her husband's death and grieving, she was "drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window" (279). Louise does not plan to waste any time with this new life she has been granted. She takes joy in the idea of "running riot along those days ahead of her" with "no one to live for her during those coming years" (279).

The events that follow shortly after can be described as nothing other than tragic. A woman who has gained so much freedom and happiness in such a short period of time never gets the chance to experience it. The true cause of her death is really left to the interpretation of the reader. The very first line of the story states that she has heart trouble so this has to factor in to her death, but Chopin does not say whether or not Louise sees Brently when he walks into the house very much alive. Some readers may say that Louise does see Brently and she dies from the sheer shock of seeing a "dead man" standing in her doorway. It could also be interpreted as Louise seeing Brently and feeling every last bit of her freedom being yanked away from her and her weak heart could not take that pain. Either way the easiest explanation is that she dies of a heart attack. However, Mark Cunningham does not believe Louise sees Brently at all. In his essay, "The Autonomous Female Self and the Death of Louise Mallard in Kate Chopin's 'Story of an Hour,'" Cunningham believes that "the resulting emotional strain brought about by her new understanding of her marriage and her supposed sudden freedom from that marriage" was too great for her weak heart to handle (Cunningham 48). Cunningham also points out that this point of view on the story puts an ironic spin on the last line, "a joy that kills" (Cunningham 48, Chopin 280). Reading the ending from this point of view creates a slightly less bleak outlook.

If the story is read with the idea that Louise sees Brently walking in the door, her last second in life was filled with a feeling of so great a loss that her own heart gave out. That last second could have been filled with so much pain and possibly even anger at Brently for unknowingly wrenching her freedom from her.

If the story is read with Cunningham's theory that Louise does not see Brently at all, the ending still feels almost as sad. Louise never gets the chance to live this new life that she feels so ready for. She never truly knows freedom; she only gets a taste of it. Although, her last thoughts were probably happy and excited ones.

In the end, Louise still got her freedom. She never gets to run riot through the streets or see new spring and summer days, but she is still free from Brently and her marriage. In death, she has become free from everything.

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"Cathedral": A Change of Heart

Shannon Dabbs

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What does it mean to change? Do we not change as a person if we change our opinion on a single individual? Raymond Carver wrote a brilliant piece "Cathedral," which revealed to readers (a bit extreme at times) how a person can be set in his or her own way. We live in a society of judgment where every person can pull from personal experience when reading this story. In "Cathedral," the narrator forms a strong opinion of Robert out of his own insecurities, from preconceived ideas through second hand stories, and outside influences. As Carver introduces Robert, the blind man, three facts become known. Not only is the narrator dealing with ignorant feelings toward blindness, along with his displeasure of his wife's friendship there also is a strong sense of jealousy which seems to be displaced.

The narrator's wife had kept in touch with Robert even though she had not worked for him in over ten years. There was more than a yearly letter or phone call, for they actually made tapes and mailed them back and forth. "Over the years, she put all kinds of stuff on those tapes and sent the tapes off lickety-split... On another tape, she told him about her divorce. She and I began going out, and of course she told her blind man about it" (Carver 36). Even if the blindness did not bother the narrator he was obviously a jealous man. His own wife had a meaningful friendship with another man, and not just any man, "her blind man." The disdain for Robert is very apparent, for how could his wife be so close to a blind man? His wife and this blind man even shared an intimate moment. On her last day working for Robert he wanted to touch her face, and she not only never forgot this moment but shared it with her husband. She also shared her intense feelings regarding the experience where Robert, this blind man, inspected her face with his fingers. A moment that she also felt so compelled to write a poem which was something she only did after really important events in her life happened to her. Mark A. R. Facknitz wrote a piece in the "Studies in Short Fiction," where he so accurately accounts for the narrator's feelings with the statement "Thus Robert, sexually threatens the narrator, with his blindness, and by virtue of being a representative of a past that is meaningful to the wife" (293). Before the narrator had even met the man, he had strong and irritating feelings towards Robert.

Although his wife's emotional connection with another man stirred jealousy within him, it was more that he lacked the ability to have deep connections. This was the root of his resentment.

He could not possibly trust such a relationship when he was incapable of understanding it. His wife begs him to be kind to her friend Robert while he is in their home, and insists she would do the same for him. As he responds with "I don't have any blind friends" which she replied "You don't have any friends" (Carver 36). The revelation of his lack of friends brings such a conclusion of selfishness, close-minded and even loneliness. He feels more confused when he does not know how to relate to Robert. "And his being blind bothered me. My idea of blindness came from the movies... A blind man in my house was not something I looked forward to" (Carver 34).

Once Robert finally arrived, the narrator was met with more jealous emotions for his wife seemed to enjoy the blind man's company. She laughed, smiled and so carefully guided him through their home. The narrator is not sure of himself with even small talk. What do you ask a blind man about his trip, surely you don't want to offend him with some ridiculous question that would only pertain to someone with the ability to see? He was surprised that Robert did not have on dark sunglasses. His idea of what Robert was to look like or act like was not coming from any personal experience. I was so fortunate to work one on one with a blind second grader last year, and upon meeting him I had no idea on what to expect. Would he have glasses to cover his eyes, would they be completely glossed over, would his eyes barely open? To my surprise they were the most beautiful blue eyes - extremely clear, round and complimented with long dark eyelashes. The only hint of blindness was the same in which the narrator encountered with the fluttering of the pupils. I would not describe these flutters as "creepy" as the narrator chose to, but he did not yet like the guy. This blind man was still intruding in his home. He offered Robert a drink for that is what he knew best.

There was not just one drink, for that "blind man" even had a smoke. The shock of Robert smoking was from the narrator's preconceived ideas of what a blind individual could or would do. Even more amazement would follow as he would watch Robert over dinner time. "The blind man had right away located his foods, he knew just where everything was on his plate" (Carver 39). Each time Robert acted in a way that was not how the narrator thought a blind man would act his wall of defensiveness seemed to break down. For now the narrator was more curious of his wife's friend. There was time in evening in which he reverted back to feeling jealous and frustrated. Robert and his wife reminisced over the past ten years and what they went through "I waited in vain to hear my name on my wife's sweet lips...but I heard nothing of the sort" (Carver 40). His wife went upstairs for a moment he was left with Robert, but only for an uncomfortable moment. It was later when his wife began to become sleepy you could sense the awkwardness that the narrator was feeling as he feared to be left with the blind man.

The TV would act as a buffer. Robert could not see the program, but he was intently listening to it, for he had two TV's of his own at home. Again, the narrator would let down his guard for he

didn't mind Robert's company at this late hour. He was somewhat tortured by dreams and the inability to sleep, so the late company was a nice change. As they listened to the program the narrator did his best to describe to him what he saw on the TV. As the narrator and Robert discussed what the TV program was talking about; the narrator quickly realized it was going to be a hard conversation. I remember the boy I worked with last year ask me how big the classroom was. I had to be creative because when thinking of describing something a person often uses other descriptive words which would need further explanation. Once the narrator realized that Robert didn't know what a cathedral was or the difference between a cathedral and another church he was uncertain on what to do.

Robert asked for him to describe it. A very hard task for a person to do that as only experienced life with sight. However, the narrator truly did invest some effort in being descriptive. What seemed like a failure on the narrator's part would lead to an epiphany. Robert asked for the narrator to draw the cathedral, for they could even draw it together. In the next moments of the narrator's life, change would take over. He already had slowly changed his opinion on Robert as the night went on, but here in that moment, one of such personal interest, he would be changed. "When Robert takes his hands and makes him close his eyes to touch the cathedral, he "sees." Even when he is told that he can open his eyes, he chooses not to, for he is learning what he has long been incapable of perceiving and even now can not articulate" (Facknitz 295). It is not just the act of drawling, it is his willingness to see life as Robert does with pure emotion and without prejudice.

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History

A Dream Come True

Rocio Rodriguez

Rocio was born and raised in Mexico. When he was five years old, she moved to the U.S. to get a better future. She is currently a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society and majoring in Nursing. This paper was nominated by Professor Matthew Garrett

In America, there is a dream where people have the opportunity to gain wealth, the freedom to participate in anything, and the chance to gain a new identity. In the present day, people have the chance to become someone better: a scholar, an officer, a teacher, or a doctor. In the seventeen and eighteen hundreds only a lucky few managed to obtain that dream. The factory owners, the rich slave owners, and the Whig party each acquired their dream. The factory owner's managed a large factory that produced cheap goods and only gave a small amount of money to his workers which allowed him to receive most of the profit. The rich slave owners possessed many slaves and forced the slaves to work on their plantations, clean the house, take care of their children, and cook for them. They profited by selling the slaves and their production. The Whig party, a group of middle and upper class men that participated in politics, only used their political power and status to help improve their way of life; they made sure government gained all the power, not the people. Although they came from different backgrounds, lived in different areas, and had different professions, they shared the same dream: to earn money and live a life of luxury. Those groups of people managed to obtain the American Dream, they gained it because they profited from the labors of others. Although they used heinous methods to gain their dream, they proved one thing - the American dream is possible to obtain.

The factory owners became rich due to the usage of many machines and the exploitation of their workers. Due to the "deskilling of labor," it allowed the factory owner to hire anyone that desired to stand and complete any mindless task the boss gave them, which meant he could hire anyone. At first he hired men, but later realized that women and children could work for a fraction of the cost. Thus the Lowell/Waltham system began, a system in which factory owners hired young farm girls. They promised the young girls' father that they would take care of them; they provided boarding, food, and enforced strict rules. Plus, they would be able to send the money they earned to their parents in order for them to keep the farm since agriculture goods could not make enough profit to support a family. The factory owners promised them a good life in the factory. If these activities cost the boss more money or it interrupted the girls' work hours, he would not allow them participate them. In the Waltham mill, there stood a reminder that any young lady who attended dance class could not work in his mill. Waltham explained

that it disturbed their work and if they participated in dance class, their lessons started at two or three in the morning. Due to the dance classes, their performance started to worsen and their health started to deplete. To make him seem like a good person, he promised the construction of a ball room for them to dance; he never kept his promise.¹

Later on, factory owners decided young girls started to become high maintenance, so instead they hired young children. In a cotton factory they hired children and paid them a small amount of money. For the 200 children they hired they only wasted 100 to 125 cents a week for those children.² Then the boss started to contract immigrants, mainly the Irish, since they just wanted work to provide for their families, so they partook in any job that pays, even if it meant low wages. The factory owners fired people left and right in order to get the cheapest deal, so he can engorge his wealth. In the meantime, the boss relaxes as the workers work for less than two dollars while he earned most of the money, and he started to attend social gatherings to boost his status to make his life much enjoyable and easier.

In addition, the rich slave owners provided the factory owners with cotton. Those two groups helped each other to increase their profits and helped their social status grow, but that generated only part of their total income. Their main source of income came from auction of their slaves and their production. The slave owners traveled to town to sell their slaves either one by one, or in bulk. The only reason why they sold in bulk was so they could sell the elderly, sickly, or the disobedient slaves in an attempt to earn money and get them off of the master's plantation. In Louisiana, a man named Bruce and his relatives traveled into town to sell their slaves. It depended on the slaves' age, sex, health, personality, and specialty that helped them calculate the worth of a slave. A man named Jo Blacksmith, a 30 year old blacksmith sold for 1,200 dollars compared to Old Charles, a 60 year old worn out man that sold for 5 dollars. Compared to men, women only sold for a small amount of money. A woman named Letha, a 20 year old maid sold for 500 dollars compared to Mary Jose, a 55 year old wash woman sold for 100 dollars. For children it differed, since the Master could not determine the personality of that child they decided to sell them for around or less than 300 dollars.³ The slaves received no mercy when Master enforced the law on them.

Each day the slaves lived in horror from the Master's watchers who attempted to whip them or threaten them with thought of them being severed from their family. The Master did not have to move a finger; his watchers and the slaves punished other slaves and forced them stay in line. In

¹ Yazawa, "Morals of Manufactures," (1837) Pg. 224.

² Yazawa, "Calculating the Value of Children's Labor," (1816) Pg. 220.

³ Yazawa, "Inventory of Slave Property," (1849) Pg. 292-5.

Mississippi, there lived a slave girl who could not keep her dress clean because of that Master punished her. They stripped, tied, and laid her down so they could whip her. Master did not do anything, instead he sent someone else: "Old Master's got 'Big Jim' down there beating her."⁴ Master did not beat any of his slaves unless they became disobedient; his slaves and workers made sure everything went smoothly. Instead, Master relaxed and attended extravagant social parties, while he attempted to show off his wealth to his friends. The factory and the slave owners differed because the factory owners pay for his workers, while slave owners owned their workers. Regardless, they share a similar life style and the way they gained their dream. The factory owner gained it from immigrants while plantation owners gained them from his slaves.

Finally, the Whig party tried to help people, so they tried to improve the economy, but in reality it mainly helped the upper class gain more money. The Whigs believed that government is the best way for people to obtain liberty, foster virtue, and foster Christian morality. They tried to impose these beliefs so they created schools, jails, and churches.⁵ Horace Mann, leader of the Massachusetts Whigs, created schools in order for the immigrant children to learn how to follow the rules, to prepare them for their life in the factory. He told the people that they should build schools for that reason and if the contraction of schools could not happen, prosperity and happiness would vanish.⁶ Also, they tried to impose as many tariffs as they could in order for people to buy American goods and it allowed more money to flow around the U.S. Some people enjoyed having the government be in charge of facilities, but many people wanted the government to help the poor class because they could not earn enough money to support their families. All the money that the Whig party generated stayed in the pockets of the upper class. The money stayed within those classes because only male upper and middle class could vote. They voted on what helped them gain or maintain their wealth. In the election of 1840, the Whigs strived to pass the 'protect domestic industry,' which implies the domestic ties and association of the family are rendered useless. Instead, an unfeeling taskmaster decides for that household.⁷ The tariff made sure the money stayed within the middle or upper class, so they hired someone who specializes in that field to make sure their money stays in their pockets. They tried to make sure the power goes to the government and limit the power of the people. They wanted to make sure the money flowed within the states, and not outside the other countries in order to make sure America grew as a nation, but kept its people behind. This helped the people in the party stay wealthy and its main contributors as well, since only middle class males gained the privilege to vote. The Whigs differ from the factory owners and

⁴ Yazawa, "Memories of a Slave Childhood" Pg. 300.

⁵ Yazawa, "Class, Culture, and the Second Party System" Pg. 259.

⁶ Yazawa, "Necessity of Education in Republic," (1837) Pg. 246.

⁷ Yazawa, "Protecting Domestic Industry," (1842) Pg. 262.

plantation because they could not commit heinous action like them, so they did not profit from labor of other people. Regardless, they shared similar characteristics by their attempt to achieve wealth, but they achieved it thru political power. They made sure their wealth stayed in their pockets.

Many of these people possessed a dream, a dream to become wealthy and have no worries for their rest of their days, but only a lucky few obtained this dream. They were lucky enough to be born in a house of such nobility, or know people with connections to someone with high status which made their journey start and end smoothly. They came from different backgrounds and they still used each other in order to support themselves in order to gain more wealth in and live their extravagant life. They gained their dream by the labor of other people and took advantage of their situation. They made sure they received the best part of the deal, while other people suffered. On their journey, they faced no hardships; their journey started and ended smoothly. Although they used heinous methods to obtain their dream, they still managed to live the American dream. To those people, the American dream does exist.

Chasing the American Dream

Andrea Estrada

Andrea was born and raised in Bakersfield. She is a Liberal Studies major and plans on transferring this year to Fresno State University. This paper was nominated by Professor Matthew Garrett.

During the years of 1776 and 1860, the American dream had become vastly different for three certain groups: the Native Americans, African Americans, and women. The American dream is a notion that has numerous meanings. Each of these certain groups went through various ordeals and struggles but yet, some of them still did not achieve their American dream.

Native Americans had been the first to arrive to America and they populated the entire western hemisphere. The first Native Americans that lived in what is now the United States, consisted of different tribes such as the Mayas, Aztecs, Iroquois, Algonquians, the Ottowas, and the Micmacs. They established cultures that stretched from unified agriculture based societies to societies that integrated hunting and farming to tribes of hunter-gatherers.⁸ But as they ears progressed, more and more people came to the United States and the Indians remained, watching foreigners invade their land.

The Native Americans had gone through problematic times during the years of 1820 and 1844. Because the Indians were living on certain land that people wanted for themselves, the United States called for the Indians to be moved west. For many, many years, the Creeks and Cherokees resided in Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. The Chickasaws and the Choctaws lived in Mississippi and in Alabama, while the Seminoles lived in Florida. Whites who supported Native Americans believed it would be better for them to move because it would shield them from financial deception, intoxication, and cultural deterioration.⁹ But the Indians did not want to relocate west. They had grown accustomed to their land and lived there for centuries. But, President Andrew Jackson advanced the Indian Removal Act and pushed it through Congress. In his First Annual Message, Andrew Jackson said that if the Native Americans refuse to leave or relinquish their land, their fate would be that of those tribes before them, eventually “weakness and decay”, or extinction.¹⁰ Eventually, Jackson’s bill was able to pass through the House of

⁸ America: A Concise History, pg. 9.

⁹ America: A Concise History, pg. 307.

¹⁰ “Andrew Jackson, First Annual Message; December 8, 1829”; Documents for American History, pg. 253.

Representatives barely, by a vote of 102 to 97. The Indian Removal Act did not leave the Native Americans empty handed though. It guaranteed land and money to the Indians that relinquished their familial land.

But a tribe called the Cherokees was determined to not give up on their ancestral lands. As one chief stated, "We love our land; it is our mother."¹¹ They even carried their case to the Supreme Court in 1831 in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*. In an excerpt from *Cherokee Nation v. The State of Georgia*, it explains how even though the Cherokee's claim to be an independent nation, they inhabit an area to which the United States proclaims a "title independent of their will", which can commence immediately after their entitlement of ownership terminates. Even though the Cherokees claimed to be a foreign nation, later on, Chief Justice John Marshall denied their case and acknowledged them as a "denominated domestic dependent nation."¹²

Indians were not able to live out their so called American dream. All they wanted was to live in peace on their land, land they had been living on for centuries. But unfortunately, United States government stepped in and took their land by force. Only one group of Native Americans managed to stay on their sacred land. The Seminoles fought a war against the U.S Army and succeeded in being able to preserve their land in Florida, but unfortunately, were the only ones who achieved this. Just like the Native Americans, African Americans went through some hardships as well.

African Americans lived an extremely difficult life. The slave population was made up of entirely of blacks. Eventually, several blacks managed to escape slavery through emancipation laws, or through flight. Already in Maryland, many slaves were promised their freedom in exchange for just a couple more years of work; and almost half of the blacks in that state were considered free. Free blacks mostly lived in the northern states and worked as domestic servants, farm laborers or day laborers, laundresses, and tenant farmers.

Granted, there were still many enslaved blacks down south, and their conditions are just as bad as they were when all blacks had been considered slaves. In a passage told by Gerda Lerner, she describes the state in which her and her family was treated by the people from the plantation. She expresses that the overseer whipped her dad just because he felt like it. In defending himself, Bob, Gerda's father, killed the overseer but was not ever tried for murder.

¹¹ America: A Concise History, pg. 307.

¹² "Decision in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia"; Documents for American History, pg. 256.

Gerda also would get aggressively slapped. She got slapped so hard, she says, that she did not “know a hand could hurt so bad.”¹³ Slavery still remained a system based on fear and force.

African slaves mostly lived on plantations. They still remained close as a family unit despite the oppression, though some slaves were granted several accommodations such as working in the house, receiving better food than normal, and being able to get married. Journalist, Frederick Law Olmstead, described his observations of a plantation in Mississippi. He explains how it seems that the slaves are well taken care of and given “the necessaries of vigorous physical existence.” Many of them lived in pleasant cottages and had more than plenty of food to eat. But the use of physical discipline stayed in constant use. The overseers penalized the slaves whenever they saw fit.¹⁴ A number of slaves resisted this type of abuse.

Hundreds of slaves tried their best efforts in rebelling against their master. The most effective way of rebelling was silent sabotage. They would slow the pace of work by breaking tools or faking sick. Some would spit in their master’s food or steal their food. Others would even go as far as poisoning the food, burning down houses and barns, and damage equipment and crops. Either way, their masters always resorted to physical force. A less common resistance was revolt and a very significant revolt started with Nat Turner, who strategized against his white masters and planned on taking revenge. In the end, white outnumbered blacks and resistance was futile.

Although more than half of African Americans continued to be slaves to white owners, they were on their way of achieving their freedom and that much closer in reaching their American dream. Some blacks managed to gain full control of their lives. There stood some African Americans who attained immense distinction and enslaved blacks looked up to their free people and knew that there would be some hope for them in the future. African Americans were the only group that came close to their dream. Women on the other hand, continued to be oppressed.

Women have been fighting for equal rights for a very long time. They have been ostracized from participating in anything political and have always remained in the household. But during the women’s rights movement, they managed to strengthen their authority in the household and made an impact in their family life as well.

¹³ “Memories of A Slave”; Documents for American History, pg. 300.

¹⁴ “Slave Management on a Mississippi Plantation”; Documents for American History, pg. 290.

Women were the main supporters of abolition. They were especially against the way slave owners treated their sex. Angelina Grimke made her opinions public on her opposition of slavery that eventually led to her promoting women's rights. She explicates that a women's rights are "an integral part of her moral being" and are something that cannot be taken away. Grimke also explains that women should be able to have their opinion taken into consideration in politics. If women are counted to increase the amount of Representatives for the states, then women should at least be given the liberty to petition.¹⁵ Many women joined in the abolition movement with their husbands as well, but they never became treated as their equals.

Women rights activists organized a women's convention in Seneca Falls whose purpose was to claim equality to all women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott planned this gathering and utilized the Declaration of Independence as a model. The structure of the Declaration of Independence was present, but the overall concept solely focused on the problems that women faced. The Declaration of Sentiment and Resolution, as they called it, mentions that women have to fight for their equality for which their Creator envisioned it to be.¹⁶ Most women, during this time, advocated greater rights for themselves.

Women's main goal was to achieve equality for themselves. They, unfortunately, did not achieve that dream but many of them started the process in eventually reaching that goal. They continued to be seen as a minority and were not given a voice in politics, but certain women's activists created a path for women in the future to have more success.

Native Americans, African American, and women were all groups that suffered hardships through this period of time. The Native Americans forcibly moved from their ancestral lands and African Americans still continued to undergo the agony of slavery, though some made their way to freedom eventually. Women endured the injustice of inequality, but perceptions of their role began to change. Sadly, none of these of individuals fully reached their American dream.

¹⁵ Breaking Out of Women's Separate Sphere; Documents for American History, pg. 282.

¹⁶ Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions; Documents for American History, pg. 283.

Dreamin' in America, 1776-1860

Gabrielle Laney

Gabrielle is a Psychology major. She knows that she wants to work with children in the future. This work was written in History B17A, and it has served to increase her confidence and her writing skill. This work was nominated by Professor Matthew Garrett.

Throughout American history, people have tried to accomplish the American Dream. The American Dream is the idea that no matter where someone is from or what social class they come from, he or she can make their way through the ranks, be who they want to be, and gain material possessions. Some groups of people in America's past achieved the American Dream, however, most did not. Some examples of groups that failed to live the American Dream include the slaves, the Native Americans, and women. Although these groups lived and perceived life in different ways, they chased after one common goal: to live a happy life and accomplish the American Dream.

Slaves rarely accomplished their goal of living the American Dream. Slaves, mainly African American peoples, came to America in the early 1500s along with the Spanish.¹⁷ As the agriculture of different products, such as sugar and tobacco, grew, the demand for laborers also grew. Slave trade gained high importance in the American economy. Slave traders would travel to Africa by way of the Atlantic Ocean, capture many African Americans to sell as slaves, and travel back to America. Typically, plantation owners bought slaves to help with strenuous agricultural labor. Slaves often endured many cruelties at the hands of their masters. Charles Dickens recorded some of the horrors that slaves endured, including "gashed flesh,...lacerated backs,... and brands of red-hot irons..."¹⁸ Masters used threats to keep slaves "in line," like threatening to sell a disobedient slave, breaking up the slaves' family. Wives would be sold off and taken away from their husbands, children from their mothers, and fathers from their children. No slave maintained absolute safety from being sold. In fact, one in four slave marriages failed because of this.¹⁹ The only way that a slave might have a guarantee of some safety from being sold is if they met the requirements of being a "loyal and worthy" slave, like drivers, mammies, or trusted house servants.²⁰ Many southern whites adopted no moral

¹⁷ Henretta, pg.6

¹⁸ Henretta,"Slavery and Social Brutality," pg. 339

¹⁹ Henretta, pg.358

²⁰ Henretta, pg. 359

objections to slavery, so they justified their actions of breaking up slave families as just business or selling property, much as people today would sell a car or a chair.

Slaves failed to live the American Dream because they rarely gained their freedom. Slave owners often thwarted any actions slaves took to gain their freedom. For example, two different fugitive slave laws, one in 1793 and the other in 1850, passed in order to keep a reign of slaves. These fugitive slave laws said that runaway slaves must be returned to their master, even if they ran away to a free state. Slave “bounty hunters” and catchers used these fugitive slave laws inappropriately, but to their advantage. The slave catcher would often capture free African Americans and sell them to plantation owners in the South. Once captured by a slave catcher, fugitive or freed slaves lacked the choice but to be re-enslaved because of their inability to bring the matter to court or testify on their own behalf. Around two-hundred fugitive and freed slaves returned to enslavement because of the fugitive slave laws.²¹ A known example of this is the enslavement of Solomon Northup. Northup, a free African American, became enslaved by slave catchers that promised him money to work and travel with the circus. Northup excitedly took the job, unsuspecting of the men’s intentions. Northup, states that when he insisted he was free to the man that bought him, the man replied “[Northup] was his slave... he denied I was free...he called me a black liar, a runaway from Georgia...”²² Northup's story reflects opinions and treatment of many African Americans by white southerners at that time period.

Native Americans are another group of people that typically failed to accomplish living the American Dream. European Americans often looked down upon the Native Americans because the Americans considered them “savage.” The biggest reason that Native Americans could not typically live the American Dream dealt with land issues. Americans constantly removed Native Americans from the land that rightfully belonged to them. After all, the Native Americans lived in America long before the Europeans arrived. The ideal of the American Dream is to gain possessions and climb the ranks. Native Americans failed to obtain land, and during that time period, land determined the status and success of a person. European Americans constantly pushed and removed Native Americans off of their land. President Andrew Jackson commented on the removal of Native Americans from their lands, saying “Professing a desire to civilize and settle them, we have at the same time lost no opportunity to purchase their lands and thrust them farther into the wilderness.”²³ This statement shows the oppression that the Native Americans experienced. European Americans constantly tried to push their belief systems and

²¹ Henretta, pg. 340, 404

²² Yazawa, “The Enslavement of Solomon Northup,” pg. 307-308

²³ Yazawa, “On Indian Removal,” pg. 253

ways onto the Native Americans, disregarding the well-being of the Native Americans by removing them from the land they occupied for many generations.

Typically, Native Americans failed to gain status in the American Society, making it impossible for them to live the American Dream. Americans always looked down on Native Americans. Not only was racism a factor pinned against them, but many Americans considered Native Americans immoral and vile people. As Elias Boudinot, a well-educated Cherokee who participated in treaty negotiations, said of the Native Americans, "I say their condition is wretched. Look... and see the progress that vice and immorality have already made!"²⁴ Boudinot's thoughts of the Native Americans reflected what most people thought of the Native Americans during that time period. Because of these views, Americans constantly tried to "save" Native Americans by attempting to assimilate them into the European American culture. The main focus of assimilation lied in religion. European Americans tried to Christianize Native Americans, but the Native Americans usually rejected Christianization, or they tried to blend the two religions.²⁵ Because of these actions by the Native Americans, European Americans continued to oppress and take land from them.

Lastly, women during this time period did not have the ability to live the American Dream, but they took steps to gain the necessary rights for women to be able to live it in the future. Since the settlement of America, women always possessed little rights compared to men. When a woman married, her husband would take control over all of her assets. Women lacked the right to vote, the right to property, and the right to a first-class education.²⁶ Over time, women longing for these rights sparked a women's movement. Women first gained notice in the temperance movement, or the time period in which drinking alcohol was spoken against based on religious objections.²⁷ Women joined different organizations to prevent and fight against alcoholism. After these movements, women began to chase after rights for themselves, starting the idea of men's and women's equality. The main focus of the women's rights movement involved obtaining the right to vote. Women wanted to have a say in what went on in the public sphere, so they fought for the right to vote, along with the right to petition. Angelina E. Grimké spoke for many women when she said that women should at least be given the "right of petition in all cases whatsoever... If not, they are mere slaves, known only through their masters."²⁸

²⁴ Henretta, "Removal: The Only Practicle Remedy," pg. 310

²⁵ Henretta, pgs. 205-206

²⁶ Yazawa, "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions," pg. 282- 283

²⁷ Henretta, pg. 342

²⁸ Yazawa, "Breaking Out of Women's Seperate Sphere," pg. 282

Without the right to vote, women remained subordinate to men and out of public decisions. By gaining the right to vote, women could no longer be oppressed by men, they could gain a voice, and they moved one step closer to being able to live the American Dream.

Many groups of people in America's history have tried to live the American Dream, but most failed to do so. During this time period, America went through many changes, making it hard for some to live the American Dream, and creating an opening for others. The slaves and Native Americans, because of constant oppression and racism, rarely accomplished living the Dream. Although women during this time did not have the ability to live the American Dream, they started their journey toward rights for themselves, and future generations, so that one day, they could. These groups, however different they may be, all had one goal: to live the American Dream.

Understanding Culture and History Through Native American Mythology and Legends

Peter Langlois

This paper was nominated by Professor Matthew Garrett.

The study of ancient civilization is a field that can seem mysterious and difficult to understand. There are, however, some clues that provide glimpses of what daily life might have been like for certain peoples throughout the world. Typical clues used by historians today include ancient artifacts found on excavation sites, written histories, and even entire cities dug up from underground. Another useful source of information in determining the way life was in the age of certain ancient civilizations exists in legends and mythology passed down from one generation to another. The oral tradition is especially prevalent in the ancient Native American cultures. It is so valued that many of these stories were passed down to the present. These Native American legends and mythology provide revealing insights into the culture and history of tribal communities.

Using Mythology to Understand History

Upon first reading or hearing one of these stories, one may be tempted to assume that it is simply an amusing story with no real cultural significance. This notion, however, is erroneous and one must take a more serious look at each story passed on. Each of these narratives was told for a reason; something was taught as typical cultural norms and values revealed themselves. Concerning the subject, Professor Herbert W. Luthin stated, "Stories are always more than just entertainment. Much of the conscience and philosophy of a culture is expressed, either directly or indirectly, in the myths of its people."²⁹ Discerning these norms, however, may present a bit of a challenge. There are certain aspects of society that are understood by that particular society and a story might not specifically state a certain, understood aspect of culture. For example, motivations for a character acting in a certain way may or may not be explained. The motivation may just be understood by the culture, and any given member of that society would act in that particular way, given that circumstance.³⁰ This ambiguity requires the reader to approach each of the narratives with a certain sense of objectivity and somewhat of an analytical mind. Otherwise, certain actions may be misinterpreted.

²⁹ Herbert W. Luthin, *Surviving through the days: translations of Native California stories and songs: a California Indian reader*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 49.

³⁰ Luthin, p. 47.

Despite the problems associated with the interpretation of the narratives, they remain a very important source for determining societal norms as shown in several extensive analyses on the topic. Thomas C. Blackburn conducted a study of the Chumash people's culture using their oral narratives passed down from the earliest of Chumash generations.³¹ Using these narratives, he identified several cultural aspects specific to this particular tribe. Of all the important norms that he discovered, some of the most significant are the reality of life as the Chumash people understood it, the way life ought to be or the values they worked toward, and the social norms associated with different types of interpersonal relationships. Melville Jacobs conducted a similar type of study using the stories of the Clackamas. He discovered that the stories of that particular tribe emphasized the relationships that people shared one with another. While many of these narratives are understood to be fictional stories, several of them retell actual historic events and are therefore presented as histories. Many histories, however, have over time become "legend" and are embellished to the style of such. Still, the fact that these legends exist imply that certain amazingly catastrophic events must have occurred near these peoples. The combined work of these and several other scholars studying this field show that the culture and philosophies of these individual tribes can be understood, and so can certain major historic events, simply by analyzing the traditional stories of each tribe.

Perceived Reality of Life Made Evident

Each culture views the world through a type of lens which helps them understand the reality around them. The ancient American peoples were no different and the information found in their oral narratives presents that reality. The Clackamas presented through the character Coyote the inherent qualities of a male as being very sexually active and adventurous with the ability to reconstruct the future while presenting women as fragile and socially dependent on men, except where men are not present (i.e. a husband dies, abandons the family, etc.), and having strong maternal instincts.³² This was one of their realities. A great majority of the Chumash narratives take place on Chumash lands. Other lands simply were not as much of a concern for them in their reality. While many Europeans have an aspiration to go up toward the heavens, from where they perceive they left the presence of God, many native tribes have an

³¹ Thomas C. Blackburn, *December's child: a book of Chumash oral narratives*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 1-88.

³² Melville Jacobs, *The content and style of an oral literature; Clackamas Chinook myths and tales*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 141, 160, 171.

aspiration to go down toward the earth, from where they believe they emerged.³³ This emergence from the earth couples a belief that all life began as one and slowly split off into several different categories of life. As stated by one Navajo holy man, "The Navaho people have always believed in evolution."³⁴

The spiritual beliefs of the tribes were a very integral part of their culture; there was very little differentiation between the religious and the secular.³⁵ One very important spiritual reality that is common to many tribes is that all things in the universe are living, sentient beings and anything that happens in one's life is a direct result of the relationship that they have with their surroundings. This can lead to a belief that life outside one's normal surroundings can be unpredictable and dangerous as the spirits surrounding him may view him as an unwanted stranger.³⁶ For this reason, it is crucial to be at peace with the environment. The Navajo call this concept Hózhó. One Navajo described, "Hózhó means that all things should be right and proper. It means maintaining good health, avoiding excess in all things, being thankful and prayerful, adhering to the old stories and songs, believing in oneself, and recognizing one's responsibility towards all aspects of the world we live in."³⁷ A Chumash narrative demonstrating the belief in this concept tells the story of the grandson of a woman, Momoy.³⁸ Momoy is a prominent character throughout the Chumash tales, but this tale is centered on the adventures of her unnamed grandson. In one of his escapades, he proved himself to be quite the warrior by defeating a bear. Later on, he played a popular Chumash sport and wagered on the outcomes of the games. Due to his greatness, not luck, he won every single wager. Chance was not even considered. Later, as the rich men of the village were tired of seeing him win all the time, Coyote was asked to cast a spell on him to make him lose. From that point on, he lost every single wager and lost all of his belongings. A different part of this same narrative shows that Momoy always warned her grandson not to venture off too far. His disobedience to this council led him into much danger. He even got into a bit of mischief with the sun himself. This

³³ Thomas Alexander, "The Fourth World of American Philosophy: The Philosophical Significance of Native American Culture" *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*. (Summer 1996, Vol. 32 Issue 3), p. 383-384.

³⁴ Alexander, p. 384.

³⁵ Lee Irwin, "Themes in Native American Spirituality." *American Indian Quarterly*. (Summer/Fall 1996, Vol. 20 Issue 3/4), p. 311.

³⁶ Blackburn, p. 66, 67-68.

³⁷ Robin R. Fast, "The Land is Full of Stories: Navajo Histories in the Work of Luci Tapahonso." *Women's Studies*. (April 2007, Vol. 36 Issue 3), p. 191.

³⁸ Blackburn, p. 126-134.

belief of the general danger of all things around them led the Chumash to a belief that even surrounding tribes were dangerous and should be avoided. One must only deal with those most familiar to him to protect himself in this dangerous, ever changing world.³⁹

Societal Values Made Evident

As important as it is to understand life as it is, people must push toward certain values and encourage life as it should be. The oral narratives provided an effective way for each tribe to communicate these values to its members. Certain stories portray the importance of certain ideals as its characters succeeded when they gave heed to their society's norms. A powerful example of this is seen in many of the creation or emergence stories that the tribes would tell. Though the exact details differ, most tribal emergence stories portray a group of individuals working together to create the earth, thus demonstrating the connection all living things have together and the importance of mutual respect and a sense of community and cooperation.⁴⁰ In many cases, unfortunately, these values were not a reality for the natives. Clackamas, for example, would portray many instances of unwanted Oedipal relationships in their stories specifically as a means of ventilating the frustration they felt about not being able to solve that reoccurring problem in their society. Humor was also used to demonstrate what not to do, as characters doing improper things were seen as foolish and were laughed at.⁴¹

A value commonly held in many tribes underlined the importance of hard work and selflessness. Most societies shunned laziness and punished it in the stories.⁴² In one particular Chumash narrative, Coyote was married to Toad. Wanting to create mischief, Coyote used magic to turn himself into a beautiful woman, traveled into another town, and met Duck, who fell in love with him in an instant. On their wedding night, Coyote refused the passes of Duck by pretending to be sick. Duck fed Coyote during this time and Coyote seemed to enjoy his freeloading stay with Duck. However, the spell that Coyote used was only temporary. He soon turned back into a man and had to run away from the village. When Duck realized who he had married, he angrily made his way into the village of Coyote and killed his wife, Toad, as punishment for tricking him into marrying a man and eating all his food.⁴³ Thus one could see the value of honesty toward peers and the condemnation of foolishness.

³⁹ Blackburn, p. 73-74.

⁴⁰ Alexander, p. 385-386.

⁴¹ Jacobs, p. 135, 144.

⁴² Ibid, p. 139.

⁴³ Blackburn, p. 172-175.

In another story, Coyote was a very lazy father of sixteen sons. He would go out to hunt, but when he returned, he would eat all the food himself, never sharing with his children or his wife. As a punishment he got diarrhea. This diarrhea worsened until he fell down to his sick bed. Coyote wanted his death to be mourned, so he asked his sons to go to the top of the hill and announce his death, to attract mourners. The first son he asked only went a few steps up the hill when he announced it. This displeased Coyote and he sent his next son to complete the same task. This next messenger went a bit further, but that still was not what Coyote had asked for. Every son was asked to climb the hill and each one went slightly farther, but never reached the top. This laziness made Coyote very angry and he resorted to sending his youngest son up the hill. The youngest actually went all the way up the hill to announce the death of Coyote. His father was finally satisfied and expressed his love for his youngest son due to his diligence. Mourners came, but Coyote killed and ate them, but once again he did not share with anyone. This annoyed his wife, Frog, for the last time. Infuriated, she dried up all the springs of water which prevented her husband from quenching his thirst.⁴⁴ Thus, the laziness of Coyote and each of his sons was punished, teaching listeners the importance of hard work, completion of assignments, and providing for a family by sharing what one receives.

Interpersonal Relationships

Another insight into the culture of each tribe is the role individuals play in interpersonal relationships. Family forms were complex and ranged from monogamous marriages to incestuous relationships.⁴⁵ Whether seen as good or bad, these relationships were a very common theme throughout each story and the Clackamas narratives especially emphasized these social relationships. The relationship between spouses or lovers as found in the Chumash society seemed to be brittle and easily broken, while the relationship between siblings was seen as very strong and lasting. Of all the relationships, one of the strongest seemed to be the bond between grandparents and grandchildren.⁴⁶

One Chumash narrative tells of some boys from the mainland who had great lives in their villages. They were each married to very beautiful women and were quite rich. One day, they went across the sea to an island. There, they were met by another village and were treated quite well. Each boy was well fed and given another beautiful wife while on the island. The boys stayed there for quite some time until they remembered their families. Concerned that their families back home would worry, they traveled back home to their wives. They soon forgot all

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 204-207.

⁴⁵ Jacobs, p. 127, 132.

⁴⁶ Blackburn, p. 57-58, 60-61, 62.

about their new wives on the island. The island wives, however, missed their husbands. Some of them swam across the sea to find them, but when they arrived at the shore, Coyote met them, disguised as one of the husbands. One of the girls was deceived by the trick and Coyote took them for himself.⁴⁷ In this story one can see the lack of exclusive love for a spouse. While polygamy is not a concept unique to Chumash people, it is interesting to note how quickly the boys forgot about both their mainland wives and, in turn, their island wives. Also, interesting to note is how easily the island wives joined with Coyote. One of the wives in particular did not hesitate to become infatuated with Coyote when he met them on the beach.

The sibling relationship can be exceptionally strong in certain tribes. A Chumash narrative tells of two brothers traveling to visit their sister. The older brother and the sister understood that the brother-in-law hated the two boys and wished to cause them harm. With the help of their sister, they escaped the attacks of their brother-in-law and ran away. This story demonstrates the love had among siblings. The sister was willing to trick even her husband to protect her brothers. Another thing to note is the wisdom of the older brother, who almost acted as a parent for the younger one throughout their adventures.⁴⁸ A second narrative further underscores the superiority of the sibling relationship. Thunder and Fog were brothers. Thunder found a very beautiful girl and married her. Thunder and Fog would travel the world every day, but every morning, after they would leave, Fog would claim to have forgotten his belt. He would return home and kiss his sister-in-law. Thunder knew what Fog was doing, but did not say anything. Eventually, Thunder's wife became pregnant. Later, she bore a child that looked exactly like Fog. From that point on, Fog decided to not forget his belt anymore.⁴⁹ Although the story continues, this specific part particularly shows that the brothers would even ignore adultery to avoid contention within the family. Fog, on his own, decided to stop committing adultery, not at the request of Thunder.

One final noteworthy form of interpersonal relationship is the intense bond between grandparent and grandchild. In fact, in the very story of Thunder and Fog, the girl was raised by her grandmother, for her mother was too foolish to survive long enough to raise her herself. Several of the Momoy stories in the Chumash culture are about grandmothers taking responsibility for the rearing of the children and it is even apparent that the stories collected by Blackburn were retold by people quoting their grandparents, showing that this bond between grandkids and grandparents is still strong today in the Chumash culture.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 193-194.

⁴⁸ Blackburn, p. 60-61, 113-116.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 61, 104-112.

⁵⁰ Blackburn, p. 96-97.

Histories

Just as these narratives reveal the culture of their accompanying tribes, they also may be able to reveal certain historical occurrences. One widely used example of this is the famous story of the deluge. The Kwakiutl tell a story about a worldwide flood that only a few survived and had to repopulate the earth. The Tolowa have a similar story as do countless other Native American tribes.

Certain details are of course different. For example, the Tolowa pass the story on as if a tidal wave hit. It came as a result of the people being disobedient to their elders and partying after dark. All the people died except for a boy and his sister. As there were no men left for the girl, she married her brother. She gave birth to a boy. Later, a single woman survivor came into contact with them. The brother married this other woman as well and she gave birth to a girl. Both babies grew up and married each other and the repopulation of the earth began.⁵¹ The Kwakiutl report that both rain and a tidal wave hit. A large group of people were saved by previously built canoes, as they seemed to know what was going to happen before it happened. After the wave hit, the canoes split up and each group established a different tribe.⁵²

By simply looking at the myths, it is difficult to conclude exactly what happened. Each flood may have occurred separately, or perhaps it was the same flood being told from different viewpoints. It is difficult to differentiate between fact and fiction as these myths have become more legendary than anything else, but reading into the accounts, at least one thing is made certain: something catastrophic must have occurred for such a large number of tribes to have passed this story down. Further evidence is required to determine the exact details, but one can definitely conclude that a large number of Native Americans believed in a worldwide flood long before Columbian contact.

The Importance of the Narratives

The oral tradition is a method of communication that must continue for the study of Native American culture and history. They can be difficult to record as several storytellers view them as sacred and do not readily share them with outsiders.⁵³ It seems, however, that they will continue

⁵¹ Luthin, p. 67-76.

⁵² The Kwakiutl Story of the Deluge as found in: Mark Nicholas, Kenneth Townsend, *First Americans: A History of Native Peoples, Combined Volume*. (Pearson; 1 edition January 19, 2012), p. 7.

⁵³ Fast, p. 188.

to be passed on from one generation to another. More narratives are also in the making, as many of these tribes are still in existence today and storytellers still wish to pass their knowledge on to further generations. Thus, one can study the modern culture of each of these societies through these modern oral narratives.

Just as modern cultural values and norms can be determined by studying the popular fiction and nonfiction of the modern society, Native American myths and legends are an informative fount from which the scholar of history can learn of the people of the ancient Americas. They provide valuable insights into the way these cultures viewed themselves and their lives. Aspirations they held and actively worked toward reveal themselves. Important interpersonal relationships are described and commented on. Even a few historical inferences can be made by studying these myths. Legends and mythology of the Native Americans, when objectively studied, are and will continue to be an important source of historical and cultural information.

Featured Works

Considering Lane Splitting

Dakota Hall

This is Dakota Hall's second semester at Bakersfield College. Currently, he is thinking about majoring in Robotic Engineering, but he is not sure. This essay is significant to him because he is a rider himself.

Opinion Section

Bakersfield Californian

P.O. Bin 440 Bakersfield, CA 93302

Considering Lane Splitting

Dear Editor:

According to the American Motorcyclist Association website, California is the only state in America that allows lane splitting for motorcycles. The reason why is because most people don't believe it is a safe act. Lane splitting is when a motorcycle is passing two vehicles by going between them in the middle, whether they are moving or not. The strategy behind this action is for a motorcyclist to escape being boxed in and to lower the amount of risk for themselves. For a motorcyclist, one of the safest things they can do for themselves is to avoid being boxed in and away from cars.

To help you understand, imagine yourself on a motorcycle; you don't have a metal frame around you to protect you in a crash, nor do you have a seatbelt. The only safety you could have is a helmet, riding gear, and your reflexes. It is much safer for a rider to avoid being boxed in where the chances of an accident happening are high. Because if one mistake takes place whether it is the rider or the drivers fault it most likely means instant death for the rider. This Strategy is also helpful at stop lights. It is common (especially at night) for a driver to approach a row of stopped cars at a red light and end up rear ending a motorcycle that was directly behind the cars. In an instant, the motorcyclist would most likely be killed, being crushed between the car behind them, and in front of them or receive severe injuries. Now apply lane splitting to the situation. The motorcyclist would be in the front of all the stopped cars at the light. And he/she would have an easy take off when the light turns green. The possibility of the motorcyclist getting hit from behind is eliminated. According to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation website, over half of all fatal motorcycle crashes are caused by the motorist not seeing the motorcyclist.

It takes some experience to know when lane splitting is necessary; it is not always the best solution. But, in most cases, it usually is the most helpful solution. Most motorcycles are small and narrow, if you think about it this is one of the many things they are made for, to be able to quickly maneuver out of dangerous situations. Now I'm not saying it is best to accelerate whenever a rider has room between cars, but rather to use this ability to avoid collisions with others on the road.

Everywhere in Europe it is legal to lane split. As a matter of fact, it is the first and most common thing they teach you when beginning to ride a motorcycle. Lane splitting is not a cheating or unfair action; it is not only best for the rider, but also for drivers around them. It saves time and makes things on the road less congested. However, usually drivers are irritated by motorcyclist lane splitting here in America. In Europe it is a common thing, and everyone is aware of it. But here, not many people are. Most are not even aware it is legal in California. I was not aware of it myself when I began to ride. As a result of their lack of knowledge, People become easily angered by this action, feeling like they are being treated unfairly on the road and do dangerous things because of it. I have experienced these situations myself, unfortunately.

Sometimes when a driver looks into their rearview mirror and notices someone lane splitting, they will begin to squeeze the motorcyclist by slowly turning into the other lane when there is obviously a car on the other side, attempting to force the rider to back up so they avoid getting hurt. Other times drivers will purposefully open their doors when noticing a rider lane splitting. Obviously this is not the best way to handle things, but it is no surprise when it comes to sharing the road with others. People want fairness on the road, but everyone needs to understand that motorcycles are totally different machines that have different abilities than cars do. And yes, I understand there are a lot of thrill seekers on motorcycles that give average daily drivers a nice scare often. And risk the lives that are around them. But it is what it is. We cannot prevent what people are going to do with what is theirs. Speeding in a car is illegal, but will that ever stop? Does not mean it's right though. Plenty of motorcyclist lane split in the states of America where it is illegal. The point is, is that why take away an ability that this machine can do, especially when the reason for it, is for the safety of the rider and others around them. It is not right to limit abilities that are for the greater good. Yes, it can be easily misused. But the whole purpose for it is safety. I hope that the other 49 states of America consider this one day, so riders can ride safe without worrying about the law.

Sincerely,

Dakota Hall

Grade Check Equals Success for All Athletes

Julianna Jimenez

Julianna was born and raised in Bakersfield, and she graduated from Foothill High School. Her major is Criminal Justice.

Sports Section

The Renegade Rip

1801 Panorama Dr, Bakersfield, CA 93305

Bakersfield College

Bakersfield, CA 93305

Dear Editor:

As I am a part of the Bakersfield College community and a Student Athlete, it seems it should be mandatory to have a grade check to help us athletes stay on track to succeed. Unfortunately, I read an article published on April 2, 2014 *The Renegade Rip* under the sports section where it says only track/field and swim only have to fill out a grade check so far. It is important to fix this problem before they get dropped from a class without them even knowing they did so. Also grade checks will help prevent the athletes from not being able to participate in their choice of sport. As I interviewed track students athlete Jason Reed, he tells me "It is to the point where the coach has been telling the athletes who have not turned in their grade check that they will not be able to compete in the upcoming meet." This is an example to make athletes want to achieve in their education and be rewarded with their passion of choice of sport. In addition, students' athletes all have a grade to make sure they are on track. If they often receive grade checks, they will not have to worry about failing a class and staying on track with school and sports. I think it is important for all athletes to have a grade check because it will prevent before them failing and force them to stay focused with schoolwork to be successful athletes.

Getting a grade check is a good idea for student athletes because they are always on the go with school, work, and games. In *The Renegade Rip*, the sports editor Robert Mullen and the athletic director Sandi Taylor talk about the athletic program. The program is trying out this new task with the swimming and track teams. Taylor says "The swimming and Track/Field were picked for the pilot because of the sizable pool of athletics and equal access to both male and female students." Now, you might ponder this question: Why do none of the other teams require this? The coaches will always have successful and non-failing students if they fill out a grade check at least once a week. If some students have trouble with a class, they will be

assigned to a tutor beforehand because the students will know their current grade. Mullen explains the previous statement by showing what the athletes go through when they are not doing so well in a class: "Currently, if a student athlete is found to have less than a C in a class, a recommendation is made to them that they have tutoring, but the tutoring is not required." Grade checks have many benefits, such as knowing if you are falling behind or if you need more help. Also, I would consider it a ticket to becoming a successful athlete/student. Some athletes oppose the grade checks because they think it is a waste of their time and/or they do not want their coach to know how they are doing in their classes. Yet there are some students who like that push and are eager to know what their grades are, not only to participate with their team but also to use it as a motivation for their significant career of choice. However, from personal experience, a challenge has always been helpful to me because I am one to know how I am doing and how can I perform my tasks ten times better.

Grade checks can be used as a threat to make athletes pass all their classes. Jason Reed, an athlete that I interviewed on this particular subject, says, "As far as the grade check goes, it is working because people who do not turn in their grade check do not get to compete in upcoming meets, and they do not get their merchandise. So it is great way to threaten the runners." I noticed people doing whatever it takes to get a passing grade just to play in their desired sport. What good is it if they are failing in a subject? With the grade checks, the student athletes will know exactly where they stand academically.

I also interviewed a Bakersfield College professor Olivia Garcia on her opinion about the grade checks, and she says with "I think any program that helps students keep track of their grade and keeps an open line of communication between the students, teacher and coach on academic progress is great. Student athletes have a lot going on so it is important for them to know that the school wants them to succeed and that by communicating early on with their teachers, they will know exactly how to achieve academic success."

Overall, every sport, not just swimming and Track/Field, should have a grade check because it gives great opportunities to push yourself to be a successful student athlete and get rewarded by playing your sport of choice with no decline. Students work hard to earn a spot on a team so they need to work just as hard to earn the right grade. A grade check program allows students athletes to accomplish that goal.

Sincerely,

Julianna Jimenez

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Five Haikus

Kyle Feldt

This work was nominated by Professor Brad Stiles.

Wakeup

Instinct arises
Cool sweat beads on my forehead.
The door goes quiet

Don-Gone

Salty air surges
He's out of his element
God damn it Walter

Shelter

Ice pricks at my cheeks
Her long coat shields me from it
I'm the lucky one

Feedback

The beetle scurries-
Across the sand, the sand shifts-
From under its feet

The urn

Fuck! Three of a kind
Break what I love, rip the cord
The run is over

Ichabod

Barak Grogan

Barak Grogan is an English major and an avid reader and gamer. His religious background and passion for science fiction inspired him to write this short story for his creative writing class (ENGL 41A). This paper was nominated by Professor Brad Stiles.

Gryphon pushed Celeste's wheelchair along the lake path. His buttoned coat did little to stop the cold air that pushed through the bare trees. Celeste pulled her blanket tighter around herself, but kept her eyes focused on the frozen lake. She loved being around the lake, though she rarely asked to visit it this late in the year, as the mountain air could be unforgivingly cold. But she had asked, and Gryphon couldn't say no to her.

"What are you going to do, Dad?" she asked, her husky voice sounding strained.

Gryphon stopped pushing and lowered his head. Celeste glanced over her shoulder and then turned her chair around. Her amber eyes peered up into his right green eye, ignoring his left amber eye. His jaw clenched and unclenched.

"I don't see why we should bother."

Celeste stared at him for a moment and then wheeled herself around and started back around the lake.

Gryphon sighed and followed after her.

"Cel, wait."

She ignored him and kept going. Finally, Gryphon jogged next to her and put his hand on her arm. She stopped and looked down at her legs.

"What do you want me to do, huh?" He looked out over the lake. "Just... let it go."

"You—" she stopped short and looked up at him. "I can't. I'm tired of this hanging over... over my shoulder. I want this to be put to rest."

Gryphon sighed again and looked back at her. "But, Cel..."

Celeste closed her eyes. "Please, Dad. Do it for me."

He swallowed and knelt down in front of her. He took one of her hands and started rubbing it between his own. His eyes searched her face. Where once he could have read and understood her expression, he now saw a face that was almost unfamiliar. It had been like this since that day, over a year ago. He didn't quite know her anymore, and he hated that. Maybe, if he did this...

"Okay, okay. I'll... go. I'll ask Nathan to go with me."

Her expression changed slightly, but Gryphon still couldn't read it. "Really?" she asked.

"Yes." He stood up and leaned forward, kissing her on the forehead. "I love you, Cel."

She reached up and pulled him closer in a tight and awkward embrace. "I love you, Dad," she whispered shakily.

"Gryphon?"

Gryphon lifted his eyes. Cillian stood in the doorway, his knuckles pressed against the doorjamb where he had knocked.

"Hm?"

"Can I, uh, can I come in?"

Gryphon nodded and leaned back in his chair. "Come on in. Close the door."

Cillian stepped in and did as instructed. He then turned back toward Gryphon.

"Have a seat," Gryphon said, indicating a chair across from him on the other side of his desk. Cillian shifted on his feet. Gryphon fought the urge to smile.

"I'd rather stand," he replied, his eyes fixed on the edge of Gryphon's desk.

"Okay. What'd you need?"

"Well, it's about Cel—" his glittering green eyes shot up to meet Gryphon's. "—este," he added quickly, then cleared his throat. "It's about Celeste." When Gryphon didn't respond, he continued. "See, I'm sure you've noticed we spend quite a bit of time together. Which I guess is normal, since we're part of your team..." He cleared his throat again. "But, I mean, we spend a lot of time with each other aside from that. And I'm sure any person with eyes or ears knows that I, well, I like her, and I think she likes me, too. So I was wondering... I mean, I guess what I'm getting at is..." This time he coughed, shifting on his feet again. "I... I'd like your permission to go out with her."

Gryphon smiled again. Cillian wasn't the nervous type, so seeing him squirm was a little amusing. He picked up his pen and began to tap it on his desk.

"I see. Well, you're right, I have noticed you two spending a lot of time together, and you're right that you quite obviously like her." After a brief pause, he added, "And I do believe she likes you, too."

He set the pen back down. "You're a good kid, Cillian," he said, distantly wondering when a person in his early twenties had become a kid, "and I think you'll do right by her."

Cillian smiled and opened his mouth to speak.

"But before I grant you permission, I need you to promise me something."

The smile was replaced with a puzzled look. "O...kay."

"Promise me you will never, ever do anything to deliberately hurt her. I'm not talking about breaking up because you just aren't meant for each other. I want you to promise you will never toy with her emotions, betray her trust—"

"Why on earth would I do anything like that?"

"I don't know, and I'd like to think you wouldn't. Ever. But when I took her in, I discovered that someone had hurt in the past, and it took her a long time to get past that. I don't ever want to see her go through something like that again."

Cillian straightened. "I would—will never do anything like that. I promise."

Gryphon studied him a moment longer. "Okay then. You have my permission."

"Welcome to Ichabod. Population: Unknown."

Gryphon read the sign aloud and then let his eyes drift past it to the city beyond. It was little more than a glorified heap of rubble. Most of the buildings were in ruins, the result of many years of neglect and countless conflicts. Few people lived in the city anymore. Those who did were people trying to escape, either from justice or their own past.

"How do you know he's here?" Nathan asked.

"He wrote a letter to Celeste. Wanted me to come here." When Nathan didn't respond, he continued, "I'm not sure why. I figured I'd be the last person he'd want to see." He looked down. "I wouldn't have come if Cel hadn't insisted."

Nathan turned his piercing gray eyes toward Gryphon. "Why did she want you to come?"

"She needs... closure."

"*She* needs closure?"

Gryphon's face darkened. "Don't. Just—don't. I don't want to talk about this. I came here to put this problem to rest." Pulling his rifle off of his back, he set off into the city.

They moved slowly. Ichabod was as dangerous as it was desolate. Daemons and humans of ill intentions were just as numerous as the desperate and impoverished who sought unattainable refuge. More than once a solitary daemon would draw near, only to recognize Gryphon and Nathan for who they were and rush into the nearest doorway or alley. Other daemons were more careful, and seemed to be following the pair, though they never went out in the open and made no move to attack. Occasionally, the two men would come across a human huddled under a makeshift bed, which was usually just a piece of cardboard for a mat and one for a blanket. Each person saw their eyes and turned away in shame or fear. There was little either man could do. Assistance would no doubt be shunned.

Gryphon tried to ignore most of them, not because he didn't want to help, but rather because he was in no frame of mind to. However, one woman caught his eye, and he found himself stopping.

"What?" Nathan asked, and then followed Gryphon's stare.

The woman had her back to the two men. She sat on a crumbling stone bench, hunched against the cold wind that blew unrelentingly through the city. She was malnourished and filthy. But to Gryphon, those things were peripheral. His eyes were instead fixed on the woman's hair. She had long, wavy locks of light red hair. Not like Celeste's, exactly—her hair was a much deeper red, and it was curly rather than wavy—but similar enough that Gryphon couldn't help but see his daughter in similar conditions. Alone. Cold. Hurting.

Nathan waited. Gryphon shifted his weight from one foot to the other.

"Excuse me," he called out. Not too loudly; he didn't want to scare her.

She didn't respond.

Taking his left hand off the rifle, Gryphon slid his right hand to just in front of the trigger and let the weight of the barrel pull the rifle down until it was pointed at the ground. He then moved closer to the woman, stopping a few feet short of the bench.

"Excuse me."

The woman stood slowly and turned around. She had amber eyes that had long been dull, but similar to Celeste's.

Gryphon cleared his throat. "You haven't happened to see a man named Cillian around here, have you?"

The woman remained silent. Her eyes shifted from his right green eye to his left amber eye.

"About this tall," he said, holding his hand about nose height. "Dirty blond hair, green eyes, crooked nose."

"You are Gryphon."

Gryphon glanced over at Nathan. He shrugged.

"Uh, yes. I'm Gryphon."

"Cillian mentioned you. Muttered your name. He said he saw you often."

Gryphon frowned. "I've never been here before, and I certainly haven't seen him recently."

"Then perhaps he referred to before... all this," she said, though she didn't look convinced.

The conversation was beginning to unsettle him. "Have you seen him recently?"

The woman was quiet for a moment. "Yes," she finally said. "He is in The Penny Tents. It's a museum on the other side of the city, by the riverbed."

"Thank you."

As he turned to leave, the woman made a parting request. "Please, don't kill him."

Gryphon stopped. "I... can't promise that."

Nathan shook his head.

"Cel!"

Gryphon stumbled over the rubble cluttered about him, but he kept moving forward.

"Celeste!"

A group of minor daemons jumped from behind the twisted wreckage of a troop transport and charged him. Gryphon reached for his rifle and then changed his mind. The daemons were too close for the lever action rifle to be of much use. He instead pulled his revolver from the holster on his right hip. He fired two quick shots. One of the daemons dropped dead; the other stumbled but kept coming. Taking a step back, Gryphon killed the wounded daemon with another shot. He turned and shot at one of the two other daemons, but both had already lunged and the bullet missed. He dropped his gun and leaned forward to brace against the two flying

bodies. At the last second he extended both of his arms, with his clenched fists facing the daemons. He extended the foot-long blades sheathed on the back of his armored forearms. Unable to change their trajectories, both creatures were impaled, their dead weight knocked Gryphon down.

With a grunt, Gryphon retracted the blades and pushed the bodies off, even as they dissolved into a thick black smoke. He found his pistol, holstered it, and continued his search.

"Celeste!"

He had received a garbled message telling him Celeste had been captured. He was told to come and try to get her. He didn't now how the enemy could have captured her; he had done his best to train her up, and she was an excellent fighter. Something was off.

"Cel!"

He ran up some steps into a courtyard of some kind. Opposite the steps, a man sat against the wall of a building, his head hung low and his legs stretched out in front of him. He wore no armor, just plain clothes. Was he insane?

Gryphon started crossing the courtyard. *"Hey, you need to get out of here. Daemons are crawling all over—"*

He stopped when the man lifted his head. It was Cillian, but not as Gryphon had last seen him. His face was drawn and tired and he almost looked sick. The most significant difference, however, was his eyes. They were dull; their light was gone.

"Gryphon?" Cillian said, his voice weak. *"What are you doing here?"*

Something about the way Cillian asked the question worried Gryphon. A knot started forming in his stomach.

"Where's Cel, Cillian?"

Cillian straightened against the wall and started shaking his head, muttering, *"No, no, no. You weren't supposed to find out. You weren't supposed to be here—"*

"Cillian, where is Celeste?" he asked again, this time emphasizing each word.

“–I was already supposed to be gone so this wouldn’t happen–”

“Cillian!”

Cillian stopped muttering and raised his lightless eyes to Gryphon’s. For a long moment he looked terrified and manic, and then both fell away. He now looked resigned.

“I’m sorry, Gryphon.”

“Cillian, if you don’t–”

“They have her, Gryphon. They have her.”

It took a moment for the words to register. “What?”

Cillian didn’t respond.

Gryphon swallowed and asked, “How?”

Cillian looked away.

Gryphon strode toward Cillian. When he was next to him, he dropped to one knee, grabbed Cillian by the chin, and forced him to look him in the eyes. “How did they get her, Cillian?” he asked roughly.

Gryphon felt Cillian’s chin begin to quiver as tears puddled in the man’s eyes. “I gave her to them,” he whispered.

Gryphon’s hand fell away from Cillian’s face. He rose unsteadily to his feet, his eyes never leaving Cillian. He took a step back and lifted his hands to his head.

“You what?”

A tear slid down Cillian’s face as he shook his head. “I’m so sorry.”

“Why? You made a promise, Cillian. Why would you do that?”

“I don’t–I don’t know... I just... I don’t know.”

Conflicting emotions swirled within Gryphon. He had worked with Cillian for years, and he had developed respect for him. But this? How could he do this?

Gryphon's anger won over. "You 'don't know?' How do you 'not know?!' Why did you give her to them, Cillian? Why?!"

"Because I'm tired!" he yelled back. He shook his head and stared down at his hands. When he spoke again, his voice was calmer, wearier. "I'm tired, Gryphon. I'm tired of fighting a fight that seems to have no end, and never seeing the 'great reward.'" He looked up into Gryphon's eyes.

"And that's how you justify—"

"No! I'm not justifying anything! I'm just... I'm just too afraid to die for something I don't believe in anymore. And, and they told me they'd let me go if I brought her to them." He lowered his eyes and added weakly, "They said they wouldn't hurt her."

"And you believed them?!"

"Well, well, well. The great Gryphon came after all."

Gryphon spun toward the rumbling voice. A chill spread down his spine. A major daemon entered the courtyard from the same steps Gryphon had used. Unlike the half-sized minor daemons who were only ever a real threat in great numbers, the major daemons were seven foot tall heaps of muscle. They were bipedal and had a roughly human form, but their heads were elongated and sported a large mouth filled with razor sharp teeth. Their sinewy arms ended with long, sharp-nailed fingers. But the major daemons' most prominent feature were their feet, which consisted of six, thick, flexible claws extending from the daemons' ankles like spokes on a wheel.

And this one was holding a limp Celeste by the arm.

"Put... her... down," Gryphon whispered, his voice cold.

The sinister smile on the daemon's face slid away. "I heard you would be hard to break." His eyes slid over to Celeste. "Her back, on the other hand, was a different matter." He let go of Celeste's arm.

Her back? What did that mean? Celeste lay unmoving on the ground next to the daemon's foot.

The daemon peered over Gryphon's shoulder. "I suppose you know what has happened? Mm?" He grunted. Almost mockingly, he said, "A promise, is a promise, eh, Cillian? You may go."

Gryphon never took his eyes from Celeste. His body had grown weak, and with a gasp he sank to his knees. This couldn't be. It couldn't. He was barely aware of Cillian leaving. All he could focus on was the betrayal. The betrayal, and Celeste.

He tried to be strong. He tried to stand up to this daemon. But it was too much.

Gryphon's body began to shake. "He promised. He wouldn't—he promised." He began to mutter this over and over. He couldn't move. He'd lost many things over the years, but nothing like this. No one he had loved so much.

"Now that's more like it," the daemon said. "You've been a thorn in our side ever since you joined the Army of Light; your devotion is too strong. We knew we couldn't kill you. But we eventually realized your one weakness." He nudged Celeste's body with one of his claws. "Her. If we could get to her, we could get to you."

Tears slid down Gryphon's face. "No, not you. Not you, Celeste. Not you."

A groan cut his muttering short. He looked up. Celeste stirred, and then was still. She wasn't dead. Not yet.

A low growl of surprise emanated from deep within the daemon's throat. His easy victory had slipped away. Gryphon pushed himself up. Celeste wasn't dead yet, and she needed him.

"Gryphon?"

Gryphon opened his eyes. "Wha—" The word caught in his throat. He cleared it. "What?"

Nathan was gathering up his stuff. "You about ready to move out?"

'Uh, yeah. Yeah.' He rubbed his eyes and sat up. The sky was a soft gray—it wasn't bright, but then it never was over Ihabod.

Night was drawing near when they spoke with the woman the day before, and, unwilling to move through the city at night, they had decided to sleep in a mostly intact building. As they had expected, nothing had attempted to rob them or kill them during the night, though they could hear the same daemons that had been following them since their arrival shuffling around outside.

As they ate breakfast, Nathan turned to Gryphon.

"I, uh, I didn't want to mention it yesterday, but your amber almost changed when you were talking to that girl."

Gryphon was one of the few in the Army of Light blessed with that ability. Upon joining, all soldiers' eyes took on a vivid sheen, with their color reflecting the person's dominant trait. Amber eyes represented warriors and fighters, blue represented protectors who favored peace and mercy, gray reflected the wise, and green was a combination of those three. Those like Gryphon were special; the green eye was like other green eyes, but he and others like him had the ability to change the color of his or her other eye to amber or blue to focus that ability.

Gryphon tried not to look annoyed. "Yeah?"

"It hasn't turned blue in at least a year. At least since—"

Gryphon set his food down and stood up. "And?" he asked, a little too harshly. He sighed and crossed to the doorway. "Sorry, I didn't mean to snap. It's just..." He turned back to Nathan. "I told you yesterday I didn't want to talk about this."

"But you need to. And besides, why else bring me along? You knew I would bring it up."

Gryphon turned away again. "What's there to talk about?"

Now it was Nathan's turn to be annoyed. "There was a time when your eye was blue more than it was amber. But ever since Cillian betrayed Celeste you've been surly and—"

"And why shouldn't I be?" Gryphon snapped. "He made me a promise, and then broke it in the worst way possible. And now Cel—" His voice caught in his throat and he had to blink rapidly to keep the tears from falling. "I haven't seen her smile since that day." He took a deep breath. "Cillian did exactly what I was afraid he was going to do. He hurt the one person I love most in this world. I think I have a right to be surly."

Nathan was quiet for a moment. "And you think Celeste is unhappy because of what Cillian did?"

"What else could it possibly be? She loved him, Nathan. Loved him. She would have done anything for him."

"Yes," Nathan said quietly, "she would have. Including forgive him."

Gryphon froze. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Nathan took a deep breath. "You know Celeste far better than I do, and I know that she is strong. Stronger than anyone else I've met, except maybe for you. But then, you practically raised her. So you should also know that she wouldn't have held onto something this long. She would have let it go."

Gryphon looked down at his feet. "Then why is she still so torn up about this?"

"Because *you* won't let it go."

"That doesn't even—"

"Make sense? Think about it, Gryphon. She loves you just as much as you love her, and she can't bear seeing you so..." Nathan tried to think of the right word. "I don't know, so unwilling, I guess, to let it go. You are the man responsible for this."

Gryphon shook his head and clenched his jaw. "No. No, this isn't my fault. This isn't on me. Can't be. He's the one who—he's the one to blame here." He turned and looked Nathan in the eyes. "And I'm going to put an end to this." With that, he turned and left.

When Nathan finally caught up with him, Gryphon figured that, based on the map he had of the city, they were an hour's walk from the museum. Ichabod seemed even more desolate as they went deeper. They saw fewer living things. In fact, the only movement came from Gryphon and Nathan, and the daemons that were still following them. The air grew colder, too, and it wasn't because of the wind; the air was perfectly still. It seemed absent of any heat, chilling Gryphon even through his insulated armor. When he and Nathan finally arrived at The Penny Tents, he had to fight the urge to shiver.

The museum was notable because, except for a thick coat of dust and the overall shabby appearance of a building long in a state of disuse, it was entirely intact. No collapsed walls, no shattered windows. The building was even devoid of cracks large or small.

"Well, this is it," Gryphon said after a long silence.

"I guess this is where I stop," Nathan replied.

Gryphon frowned and turned to face him. "You're not coming with me?"

Nathan shook his head. "No. I've done, or at least, tried to do what I came here for. The rest you must face alone. But first," he said, pulling a folded piece of paper from a pouch on his belt, "take this."

Gryphon looked down at the piece of paper. As he took it, he asked, "What is it?"

"Celeste gave it to me before we left. She said she wanted you to give it to Cillian, and she didn't want you to read it until after."

Gryphon's eyes flicked up to Nathan, briefly wondering if this had to do with Nathan's comments earlier. "What does it say?"

"Read it if you must. Just... I'm praying that you do the right thing, Gryphon."

Gryphon turned back to the museum. "I'm going to do what I have to do, Nathan."

He ascended the steps and entered the museum. Like the outside of the museum, the inside was quite different from the rest of the city. It had the same thick layer of dust, but was otherwise clean and orderly.

As Gryphon roamed the building, he decided to put the nagging thought at rest and read the letter from Celeste. It took some time for the words to register. His suspicions were correct. He tried to ignore the sick feeling that formed in his gut, folded the letter, put it back in his belt, clenched his jaw, and continued searching.

After some time, he entered a large room that extended far to his left. The room was rather dark, but peering down, he could see a lone figure sitting on the ground some distance away.

Pulling his revolver from his hip, Gryphon pointed it at the figure and slowly approached. The expansive room amplified every footfall, but there was otherwise no noise, except for occasional whispers of movement around him. It was an eerie place, far more unsettling than the rest of the town. As he approached, the figure never moved, and Gryphon began to wonder if he, or she, or it, or whatever it was, was even alive.

"I hoped you would come."

The voice was weary and ragged. It sounded old and worn. But it was unmistakable, and it sent a shiver down Gryphon's spine.

"Seems like an odd thing to hope for," Gryphon replied, trying to hide the quiver in his voice.

A long moment of silence followed, and Gryphon began to wonder if the voice had indeed come from the figure. As he contemplated turning to scan the area around him, however, the figure rose unsteadily.

"Maybe. But a year in this place can make you hope for the weirdest things." The figure walked slowly toward Gryphon, stopping a few inches from the tip of his gun.

Now that he was closer, Gryphon could make out the man's features. Like his voice, his face looked older and wearier, but there was no doubt who the man was.

Cillian.

"I honestly didn't think you'd come," Cillian said, swallowing loudly and wincing, as if it hurt.

"I came because Cel wanted me to."

At the mention of Celeste's name, Cillian lowered his head. "I've, uh, I've thought about her a lot, you know." He looked back up at Gryphon. "How's she do-?"

"You have no right to ask that question, Cillian," Gryphon interrupted coldly. "No right."

Cillian looked back down. "I guess not."

Gryphon lowered his gun. Cillian's words caused something to snap in Gryphon's head. Suddenly, all of the anger and disappointment swelled up and burst. "You 'guess not?'" The daemons that had been following Gryphon throughout Ichabod seemed to appear out of thin air and began circling the two men. "You 'guess not?!' You made a promise to me, Cillian, a promise that you would never—never—hurt Celeste! You said that you would do right by her! And when you broke that promise, not only did you betray my trust, but you almost got her killed." The daemons started to stir excitedly, moving closer to Cillian. "You betrayed her trust and her heart! You are worthless, and you don't deserve my forgiveness or hers!" The daemons were now practically touching Cillian.

"Then why don't you just leave me to them?" he yelled back, pointing at the daemons.

"Because Celeste did forgive you!"

The daemons screeched and scurried back, gnashing their teeth. They maintained their circle some distance away and, after a moment, fell silent.

Cillian stared at Gryphon, his mouth open. "What?" he whispered.

Gryphon stood straight tall, breathing heavily. After a long moment, his body sagged and he pulled the folded piece of paper from a pouch on his belt.

Tossing it to Cillian, he said, "She wrote this for you."

Cillian opened it slowly, his face a mix of conflicting emotions. Fear. Sorrow. Remorse.

Hope.

Cillian's eyes moved across the paper again and again, as if he couldn't quite believe what he was reading. Tears began to spill from his eyes. He covered his mouth and then let out a short, almost nervous, laugh. His body began to shake with a mixture of laughter and crying as he sank to the ground. His laugh/cry grew steadily louder until he finally stopped, taking deep breaths. When he lifted his eyes to Gryphon's left amber eye, Gryphon saw something he did not want to see. A glint of green light. It was faint, almost imperceptible. But it was there.

The daemons, obviously tired of what was happened, started converging on Cillian again.

He started to shake his head. "I know I don't deserve it Gryphon. I know I don't. But I'm sorry. I really am. I don't..." His eyes flicked to the approaching daemons. "I don't want this to be the end. Cel's forgiveness isn't enough. Gryphon, please. Only you can stop them."

Gryphon was shaking his head. "But you don't deserve it," he said quietly. He turned away.

The daemons seemed to take that as their cue, and upped their pace.

Cillian didn't deserve forgiveness.

"Please, Dad. Do it for me."

"This isn't what you wanted me to do. You wanted me to end this."

"Dad..."

The sounds of the daemons attacking Cillian touched Gryphon's ear. Cillian himself made no sound. That haunted look came back, that look when he said "please." Gryphon closed his eyes.

"He doesn't deserve it, Cel."

"Does anybody?"

His heart hammered in his chest. The question reverberated in his skull. Nathan's advice and Cel's face appeared in his mind. Maybe she had a point. He stood still for a long moment.

"I'm sorry, Cel."

Time seemed to drag, and as it passed, Nathan grew worried. He had noticed several daemons scurry up the steps and enter the museum, but they weren't interested in Nathan. Gryphon had been in there too long. Maybe he shouldn't have let him go alone. But no, he had meant what he said. Gryphon had to face this alone.

Nathan turned to face the entrance of the museum. It had to be over by now. But what if it wasn't? No, it probably was.

After another moment of indecision, Nathan climbed the steps and entered the museum. He searched for Gryphon. It took him some time, but after a while he entered a large hall of some sort. It was dark, but farther down, Nathan could see a figure, sitting or crouched.

"Gryphon?" he called.

No reply came. Nathan waited a minute, and then began walking toward the figure. As he got closer, he realized it was not one figure, but two. One was kneeling over a body that, even in the darkness, looked beaten and injured.

Even though his back was to Nathan, he recognized the kneeling man as Gryphon, which meant the man on the ground was Cillian. A knot formed in Nathan's stomach. Gryphon appeared to be checking Cillian's pulse.

Nathan swallowed. "Gryphon?"

Gryphon removed his hand from Cillian's neck and turned his head toward Nathan.

His right eye was green. His left eye was blue.

Did You Hear?

Jannett Talamantez

Jannett was born and raised in Bakersfield. She is a lover of books and nature. Her major is English. Jannett loves animals, sometimes more than people.

Did you hear the sound of His roaring song?
And how her winter covered the beauty it conceived?
When he runs towards her he struggles to reach
the ruins that were made at their abandon.
There is peace in her but not beyond what is lost.
She says it is but a dream not to rest in;
He says it nothing but a shadow of what is real,

And only the beginning of what is true.

Redefining the Universe

Spike Uesugi

Spike is an English major who graduated from Bakersfield College in Spring 2014. She plans to further her education at Columbia University and eventually teach English in Japan. Currently, she resides with her wonderful fiancé, Amanda, and their children (i.e., cats), Ryuuji and Katetsu. This short story contains characters that are near and dear to Spike's heart; she hopes you will love them as much as she does. This paper was nominated by Professor Brad Stiles.

When I was a kid, my brother was my universe. We came into the world together, he and I, and we both instinctively knew it, long before our parents explained what twins are. We did everything together. We slept together, ate together, bathed together. We had our own worlds of make-believe that we shared with no one else. When we were encouraged by our parents to play with other children, we were reluctant and aloof. Our universe was impregnable; it couldn't be helped that we would ignore the *real* universe.

When we were old enough to understand concepts like childbirth, our mother took me aside one day and explained to me that I came first. "You're the older sister," she said. "You have to be responsible and take care of Nicholas." I frowned at the time, thinking that I didn't want to feel any different from my brother. I could have easily lived the rest of my life thinking that we both came out at the exact same time. Now that I knew I was older, that I was different, I felt like I had to act different.

Nicholas always insisted on being exactly the same as me. We had to have the same food, the same toys, the same color clothes. He even insisted on keeping his golden brown hair the same as mine, silky strands falling below his shoulders. At first our mother suggested he keep it in a ponytail so that he wouldn't be mistaken for a girl, but soon it was time to go to grade school, and our mother insisted that he get a proper haircut. I still remember sitting in the barber's chair, waiting for my trim, Nicholas wailing the whole time that it wasn't fair.

"I-I wa-want t-to l-look just l-like N-nikkiiii!" He sobbed shamelessly, fat tears rolling from his emerald eyes. Our mother tried fruitlessly to calm him, but he could not be consoled.

I'm the older sister, I thought. I have to be responsible. I knew I had to make him stop crying somehow, so I did it the only way I knew how. I hopped down from the chair, much to the

hairdresser's dismay, and put my little brother in a headlock. He grunted, more in surprise than pain, until I started grinding my knuckles into his head.

"Ow, oww! Nikki, stop!!"

"Now, now, you two..." Our mother tried to soothe the situation, but we ignored her.

"Nicholas, you big crybaby!" I shouted, tightening my grip around his neck.

"B-but-," my brother blubbered.

"No butts! You're s'posed to be a boy, right?!"

The hairdresser fretted in the background, obviously out of her comfort zone. It's a good thing the small shop was empty at the time, or my mother would have been mortified, too. For the moment, she just folded her arms across her chest in frustration, waiting to see how I would handle the situation. My brother sniveled helplessly, trying to push me away.

"You can't even push me off, huh?" I continued berating him, hoping he would see past my callousness; I had never been this cruel to him before. Our small, six-year-old frames struggled for dominance, but I was the stronger one. Once I'd grown tired of scolding him, I released Nicholas' head and looked him in the eyes.

He was still crying, eyes red and puffy, cheeks wet with tears. He had his hair pulled over his shoulder and he was stroking the ends tenderly. He looked as if he'd rather die than lose that hair. I sighed in resignation.

"If you're gonna be such a baby, I'll have to do somethin'." I climbed back into the hairdresser's chair. "Cut my hair off."

"Nikki..." My mother started to talk me out of it, but I stopped her.

"No, Mom. I don't want Nicholas to be sad. So I will cut my hair off."

My mother gave up, exasperated. "I just can't come between you two. I suppose it's fine if you cut your hair, Nikki."

I remember the hairdresser taking my long hair and cutting it off at the base of my neck. It felt strange, as if my head was suddenly naked. She styled it androgynously, so that my brother wouldn't look too girly. After we'd both gotten our hair cut, my brother looked happy, in a miserable sort of way.

"Thank you, Nikki..."

"You're welcome, Nicholas."

We held hands as we followed our mother out of the shop.

When I was in the fourth grade, my brother was my world. We spent time with each other much more often than we spent time with other children. Spending time with classmates was something that had to be done, and was never chosen to do.

I excelled in sports and physical activities. My body had grown strong and active, and nothing pleased me more than to run and play all day. My brother preferred scholarly pursuits to playing outdoors, but he still played with me more than he read books. With Nicholas' brains and my brawn, there wasn't anything we couldn't do. If Nicholas couldn't talk our way into something, I would force our way into it. We were young and invincible.

In the fifth grade, we met Sora. Meeting her wasn't so much a choice as a coincidence; you see, Sora also loved to read, so she and my brother forged a common bond through happenstance. Having Sora around wasn't so bad at first, but I quickly grew tired of it. I couldn't keep up with their book discussions and I didn't understand their disdain of physical activity. One night, after we'd bathed and gotten into bed, I tried to tell Nicholas how I felt.

"Sora is boring. She makes you boring, too, Nick."

"Huh?" Nicholas was taken aback by the sudden topic change. "What do you mean by that, Nikki?"

I battled with my thoughts silently. How could I tell him how much I disliked her? She was boring, a bookworm, and she took my brother's attention on top of it. I was more apt to play alone those days than with anyone else. I lived in my world with Nicholas for too long; I had no idea how to make friends.

"You know, she's always into that booky stuff. We used to play outside a lot more, remember?"

"Well, yeah... But that's because I didn't have anyone to talk to about stuff like this. You know I like to read."

"I wish you'd never met her."

The hateful statement hung in the thick air. Neither of us spoke for quite some time. I didn't know how to make him understand that I wanted our time back. There's a bunch of other bookworms out there Sora could be friends with, but only one Nicholas, and he's my twin, not hers. Ever since he'd met Sora, I felt like our world was falling apart. I shifted in my sheets anxiously. We were too old to sleep in the same bed now, so our parents had gotten us a bunk bed. I laid on the top bunk, wondering what kind of expression was on his face.

"Are... Are you mad at me...?" I asked timidly. I didn't sense that he was mad at me, but he wasn't talking, so I didn't know what else to think. There was a muffled snuffle in the darkness.

"Nicholas?"

"I... I didn't know..." My brother's voice was thick with the attempt to hide his tears.

Why does he cry so much? I thought to myself incredulously.

"Nick, don't cry, come on..." Now I felt like a jerk. It hadn't been my intention to make my brother cry.

"Are you lonely, Nikki? I don't want you to feel alone."

"...yeah. I'm kind of lonely." Hesitantly, I voiced my true feelings. I felt the sting of tears in my own eyes, but I fought them back. *I'm the older sister.* I have to be responsible. I was rewarded with Nicholas' silent sobbing. I sighed and crawled off the top bunk, cuddling into the covers on the bottom bunk next to my brother.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry, Nick."

He wiped at his eyes and nodded. I stared at him in the dark, wondering for the first time how we became so different. Just four years ago, we were the same in everything. Little by little, our

personalities were changing in ways that were tough to reconcile. I didn't know what to do about it.

"I'll sleep with you tonight, Nicholas, the way that we used to." My brother sniffled and nodded in the dark.

"Okay, Nikki. I'd like that."

We slept side by side for the first time in a while. It was a sound and comfortable rest.

When I was in the eighth grade, my brother was simply my brother. The years and sense of responsibility had distanced me from him in some ways and brought me closer in others. I no longer felt compelled to be exactly the same; it was okay if Nicholas would rather sit indoors while I ran the track at school. It was okay if Sora wanted to spend an entire day poring over a difficult, old text with him. I didn't mind it. I was part of the track team and I had a lot of running to do. I could still play video games with him at the end of the day and he still came to support me during practice and competitions. We could still talk about personal things and help each other without having to do everything together. He finally let me grow my hair long while he kept his short.

He was okay with me spending time with Sora alone, too. We didn't have to be together constantly. I remember starting to like Sora a few years back; she wasn't so bad. She helped me study for tests and improve my grades. She was even sort of pretty, with her long, silky, dark chocolate hair, and her eyes were like the clearest summer sky; they were beautiful eyes, even if they were covered by thick-framed black glasses all the time. The three of us were a team, and there wasn't anything we couldn't do. If Nicholas couldn't talk his way into something, and Sora couldn't cleverly manipulate the situation, I could still force my way into it. We were young and we were invincible.

In the ninth grade, I realized that I was starting to look at Sora differently. She seemed prettier, sounded smarter, and it was getting harder to stop thinking about her. I wanted to spend more time talking with her, too. Alone. I started wanting to tell her things that I didn't even want to tell my brother. She became my best friend, and I couldn't help feeling that Nicholas was being left out. *I'm the older sister, I thought. I have to be responsible.* I decided that I would try to explain my feelings to Nicholas. Surely he would understand.

We were too old to sleep in the same room and take baths together anymore, so after dinner and our baths, I knocked on Nicholas' door. I had bathed second, so I still had a towel around my neck and my hair was damp. I wore a red tanktop and baggy grey sweats.

"Come in," my brother called out after a moment. I opened the door and walked inside. He was sitting at his computer perusing some website, completely immersed in the digital world of the internet. I sat at the foot of his bed nearest the computer chair.

"Whatcha readin'?" I asked casually.

"Nothing much, some research for a school report." He turned the chair around to face me. He was wearing a white T-shirt and blue sweats. "So what's up? It's been a while since you decided to drop in here."

"Oh, I just wanted to talk a little." I felt nervous, as if revealing my feelings about Sora would widen the gap between us in a different way, perhaps an irreconcilable way. *When did it get this way?* I mused. *I used to be able to tell him anything without fear.* I sighed inwardly and prepared myself.

"Don't you think Sora is pretty?"

"Sora? Well... Yeah, I guess so." Nicholas frowned, confused. "I don't really look at her that way, though."

"Well, I've started to." I absentmindedly tapped my feet on the floor; I was always full of nervous energy.

"Oh, yeah?" It was an invitation for me to explain myself, not really a taunt.

"Yeah. I don't know why, though. She's just..." I struggled to find the right words.

"She's just really cool, I guess," I finished weakly.

"Yeah, she is." Nicholas grinned at me. I couldn't tell if it was in a teasing way or not.

"Remember that time I said I wished you never met her?" I asked him.

"I remember."

"Well, I don't mean that anymore. I'm... I'm glad you met her, actually." I stared at my tapping feet, wondering exactly what I was trying to tell him. "She helps me with school and listens to me complain. She's really nice."

"She is," Nicholas agreed. "She's pretty handy to have around."

I exhaled sharply and stopped my restless feet. "Is it okay if I think of her that way?" I felt silly asking it, but I felt that I had to have Nicholas' blessing. *If he says no, what will I do?* I played with the idea in my head while I waited for a response. I wondered if Nicholas even understood what I was asking him. Our psychic bond had weakened over the years and I'd felt a hollow resonance in my heart ever since I'd realized it. That hollow space was there even now, as I tried to reach out to my brother. After a long silence, he finally spoke.

"Yeah, it's okay," he replied. I met his emerald eyes with mine, trying desperately to find the hidden feelings behind those deep pools of green. Were there even hidden feelings at all? I just felt like the answer was too simple. He stared back at me with a bemused smile on his face, and then I gave up; I couldn't find the hidden feelings. I knew they were there. I knew he felt differently, I could feel it in my gut, but we'd lost our ability to communicate silently long ago.

"Cool," I said. We spent the rest of the night playing video games.

School the next day was tough. Nicholas and I only got a few hours of sleep before we had to get going to school, so the morning was dragging. I laid my head on my desk and groaned, feeling sleep tug at my eyelids; my morning run had me pretty wiped out, so the lure of repose was almost irresistible. Glancing around the room, I found my brother sleeping at his desk. I chuckled to myself quietly. *Of course he fell asleep...* I thought, fondly. *But I should set the example, like always.* There was still a little time before class started, so I figured I'd go pinch his ears as a lesson. Before I could get up, I accidentally made contact with Sora's clear, blue skies; somehow, my tired brain made the connection that she was looking at me, which instantly (and irritatingly) made me nervous. Before I could hide my embarrassed red face, she smiled at me. *Ah...* I thought, burying my face into my folded arms. For some reason, the energy spent avoiding eye contact sapped the rest of my reserves. *How can I tell her how I feel...?* Before I could figure it out, I drifted off to sleep.