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WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

**Celebrating Student Writing  
Across the Curriculum**

**Prize Winners 2015-2016**

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL EDITION



# Introduction

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Now in its 16th year of publication, the Writing Across the Curriculum program's *Celebrating Student Writing* honors an array of undergraduate student writing from across many disciplines. This magazine offers a space to celebrate student achievement in writing and to highlight exemplary written work from across William Paterson University.

Inside, students show us their best. Whether intriguing creative expression, elegantly worded prose, or extensively researched writing, the student work featured in *Celebrating Student Writing* is indeed worthy of celebration. Amid the assignment deadlines and reading loads, the club meetings and sporting events, the studying and socializing, we take a few moments to savor student writing.

We celebrate writing as essential to learning and to making our way into the future. All writing is contextual, and doing it well requires that a writer understand each writing situation and the particular approach needed in that situation. Today's employers report that one of the top qualities they seek in potential employees is the ability to write clearly and effectively, which makes the writing students engage in as important as ever. Nurtured by our faculty, the student writers featured within this issue have worked hard to understand the context in which they were writing and to develop an approach most suited to the occasion, displaying style and conveying information in powerful and interesting ways.

As is the case annually, the winning entries in this year's *Celebrating Student Writing* contest were nominated by a faculty member as exemplary in a particular course. Whether a written work is nominated for its meticulous research, insightful analysis, delightful creativity, or well-crafted prose, each faculty-nominated entry is carefully considered by a faculty jury from various disciplines, who ultimately select those that best represent the excellent student writing produced across the university that year.

Many of this year's winners demonstrate work from a wide range of the University Core Curriculum's Writing Intensive courses: much of the fine writing featured here comes from upper division courses from various disciplines, and there are examples of excellent student writing from our lower division. Regardless of the course for which they were initially written, all of these student pieces give us a glimpse of the effort that went into their development and an insight into the potential for student writers at every level to do great work.

*Celebrating Student Writing* would not be possible without the continued support of those who are integral to its success. Thanks to professors Stephen Betts (Marketing and Management Sciences), Emily Monroe (Biology), and West Moss (English) for serving on our faculty jury and devoting the hours necessary to reading and discussing each entry. Thanks to Provost Warren Sandmann and Associate Provost Stephen Hahn for more than two decades of continued support of the Writing Across the Curriculum program, which publishes this magazine, and a special thanks to Kara Rabbitt, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, whose belief in and assistance with our WAC programs continues to sustain our work. And finally, thanks to the many faculty who support student writing every day in their classroom work and who nominate the best of what they see to this contest, and to the students who are willing to share their work – without your commitment we would be denied this opportunity to celebrate your terrific writing.

For more information about the Celebrating Student Writing contest, refer to the back page of this magazine or visit our web site <http://www.wpunj.edu/cohss/departments/english/writing-across-the-curriculum.dot>

*Liane Robertson, Associate Professor of English and Director, Writing Across the Curriculum*



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*Note: Student entries are reprinted as submitted, with original content that has been formatted to fit this magazine.*

# A Failing Education

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*Florinda Abedinoska*

**Course:** Liberal Studies Colloquium (LBST 2010)

**Professor:** Elizabeth Victor, Philosophy

**Student:** Florinda Abedinoska

**Research Essay:** A Failing Education

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment required building a position, through several works written and revised by students throughout the semester, with the aim of bringing the

various authors studied in the course into conversation with the student's thoughts and ideas.

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In contemporary American culture, people need education to be successful, to better themselves and strive toward happiness. We often hear politicians and business moguls pride themselves on how they promote the importance of education. However, education is not something that is provided for all and it is not something that benefits all. There is a misconception that as long as an individual receives an education, they are receiving something of benefit. What is often overlooked is the quality of the education. Education is not effective or of substantial value if it does not foster critical thinking.

Paulo Freire, Carter Godwin Woodson and Michelle Alexander explain the benefits of education and the conditions under which it improves a person's life. Education is crucial, but in order for it to be successful, it should encourage students to feed their minds with knowledge and critical thinking skills. In this paper, I will explore how education has been employed to oppress people and ensure failure

amongst certain people through the works of Freire, Woodson and Alexander. I will begin by examining Freire's "banking" concept of education and how it hinders critical thinking. Then, I will move to Woodson and explore how African Americans were oppressed through education. Finally, I will end by looking at how Alexander explains racial stigma created about African Americans due to the oppression they have faced over time and continue to face.

Throughout *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire discusses the importance of critical thinking and liberating people who are oppressed. In chapter two of his book, Freire discusses the role education plays in oppressing people. He emphasizes that certain teaching methods do not allow for individuality in students and that the communication between educators and students is superficial. The main method of educational oppression described by Freire is the banking concept. The banking concept of education focuses on how little students are taught to think for

themselves. Even when capable of formulating their own ideas, students are discouraged from doing so, discouraging their critical thinking. It is a form of oppression in the sense that it implies teachers are superior and beyond questioning, while students are simply sponges. Students are required to soak up the information shared with them and do nothing more with it except regurgitate it when necessary.

Through this kind of interaction, students feel disconnected from their teachers and their teachers are encouraged to feel superior to their students. This type of teaching method ensures that the students are aware of who holds both the power and the knowledge. Freire explains how knowledge transference in the banking concept becomes a form of oppression. Freire states, “In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (72). Without this knowledge, the students would know nothing, and as a gift from their superiors, they should not question it.

Discouraging students from questioning ensures that students do not have the critical thinking capacity to realize that their education is a tool of oppression, which ensures that students accept a passive role in society. Freire explains the effect the banking concept has on students. “The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of the world” (73). The effects of having an education centered on the banking concept follows a student throughout their life. Students will continue to go through life without a real understanding of what is happening around them. They will struggle to succeed because they lack the ability to think creatively and for themselves. It is evident that the banking concept of education is of no benefit to the students and it is the most ineffective way to teach, however, it is also very clear that its purpose is to prevent individuality



and independence. This form of education is known to have affected many, especially the African Americans that once were the slaves of White Americans. Carter Godwin Woodson explains the difficulties faced by many African Americans because of the oppressive education they received.

In *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, Carter Godwin Woodson stresses the educational disadvantages that many African Americans have faced. He focuses on how the educational system failed African Americans because it did not teach or encourage them to work to the best of their abilities once they were liberated from the legal system of slavery. Instead, the education system worked to ensure that African Americans were not aware of their full potential and remained unaware of their abilities and opportunities. Worse still, the education system discouraged African Americans from helping their own people. It pitted African Americans against one another and it encouraged white superiority.

In chapter two, “How We Missed the Mark”, Woodson emphasizes how the education system for African Americans was ineffective and detrimental to African

Americans themselves and their communities. Throughout the chapter, Woodson describes how the education that African Americans received was limited in resources and information. No matter which career path an African American chose, they were not prepared to succeed once they entered the real world. For instance, Woodson describes the outcome of African American men graduating from industrial schools as “...few of them developed adequate efficiency to be able to do what they were supposedly trained to do” (15). He explains that this was a result of the lack of hands-on training they were given. However, the white men that went to similar schools received the necessary hands-on training to be skilled in their future careers and to be able to receive jobs and excel at them in the appropriate way.

Like Freire, Woodson points out that the education system that was used to educate African Americans was one in which individuality and independent thinking was not encouraged. The education system failed African Americans, promoting segregation and self-doubt. It is evident that the education system that was supposed to educate recently liberated African Americans served its purpose. The purpose of this system was not to promote independent thinking or critical thinking, but to promote white superiority and to further diminish conditions for African Americans, and it did just that.

Woodson explains how an African American man might have felt while being a part of this system. “He was spending his time studying about the things which had been or might be, but he was learning little to help him to do better the tasks at hand” (14). Education was useless in terms of preparing African Americans to better their lives. They were educated, however, they were never educated to be as successful, let alone more successful, than a white man. Throughout chapter two Woodson describes how white men were always at an advantage. They received actual hands-on training and were encouraged to use their

knowledge and experiences to create careers for themselves, whereas black men were provided minimal education, but not offered the tools to succeed. This form of education created a false perception of equality. African Americans were educated, but never to the extent in which any of them had the ability, experience and knowledge to surpass a white man's success.

Education is an important system that should be used to enlighten students with important information while also fostering independence and individuality. The purpose of an education should be to prepare students for their lives beyond their school setting, for the betterment of themselves and society as a whole. Freire and Woodson would agree that the educational system has never served all students, but it has worked to serve the superiors. Freire focuses on the banking concept while Woodson focuses on how African Americans were never given the opportunities to be educated fully. Freire's focus is on how education can be oppressing if not properly administered. Feeding information to people without allowing them to develop their own ideas is not an effective education. In this same vein, Woodson focuses on how the lives of African Americans were negatively affected by the education they received. Both authors say that the educational system at times, works against the people it should be helping the most.

The education that Woodson had described, and was provided to African Americans, was an education similar to the one Freire refers to as the banking concept. Freire and Woodson stress that an ineffective education is provided by the dominant class to ensure that the oppressors remain in power. For instance, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire states, “The oppressors use their ‘humanitarianism’ to preserve a profitable situation” (73). Woodson also makes a similar point in *The Mis-Education of the Negro* when he states, “The idea of educating the Negroes...was



largely a promoting of philanthropy...the freedmen could not expect much sympathy or cooperation in the effort to prepare themselves to figure as citizens..." (13). Woodson emphasizes that blacks were not given the equal educational opportunities that their white counterparts were and this lead to negative impacts on their lives beyond their school settings. The banking concept described by Freire aptly describes the education received by African Americans of Woodson's time; African Americans were only instructed on what their oppressors deemed necessary for them to know. Critical thinking and individuality was not promoted. Woodson would agree that the banking concept was the main teaching method used to educate African Americans just as Freire would agree that the education given to blacks was one in which it worked to "... turn women and men into automatons- the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human" (Freire, 74).

Like Freire and Woodson, I also believe that education is key to successful living, but when it is not properly utilized, it can be detrimental to students. An education that does not help individuals develop the crucial skills needed to help themselves and provide for themselves, is an education that has not served its purpose. When an education that lacks critical thinking and is combined with an educator who does not care to encourage the best in their pupils, the student suffers. This student enters the real world unequipped to handle its competitive work force and provide for themselves. This can trigger a chain reaction. The educational system and this type of educators will teach the next generation of educators, who will then teach to their pupils what they have been taught, a lack of critical thinking and an inability to be open-minded. Contemporary America is a prime example of such. Students will be taught information that oppressors want them to know and they will gather as much of this information as necessary to do well on a test, only to forget that information

after the class ends. In this kind of system, students are often discouraged from creating well-informed, critical opinions. In this way, the education system in contemporary America mirrors that described by Freire and Woodson, and seems to be in this oppression-perpetuating cycle. If we hope to break this cycle, it is imperative that our educators and our lawmakers learn from the works of Freire and Woodson and work to ensure that the education provided to Americans is not one similar to the ineffective education of the past.

Paulo Freire focuses on the liberation of all oppressed people and how to achieve liberation, while Carter Godwin Woodson focuses on how liberated African Americans were still oppressed. Both authors make note of the importance of education and its power to oppress people if not properly conducted. This type of education does not allow for people to realize the detrimental effects of living under oppression. The banking concept ensures that those in power remain in power because the rest of society is oblivious to the corruption and oppression they are facing. Woodson explains that being liberated is of no use without a proper and effective education. His focus on newly freed African Americans is centered on the poor education they received in which it only taught them what the dominant class deemed necessary. This connection is also seen in Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*.

In *The New Jim Crow*, Alexander focuses on how the war on drugs has led to the mass incarceration of African Americans and has become the new Jim Crow. Throughout the book, Alexander explains how education has played a great role in the oppression of African Americans, particularly how it has lead them to live lives of poverty and inequality. African Americans not only suffer from an oppressive education, but also racial stigma. Alexander clarifies that this racial stigma is due to how African Americans are portrayed as being uneducated, inferior, and likely to be criminals. She explains "Racial stigma is produced by defining

negatively what it means to be black. The stigma of race was once the shame of the slave; then...second-class citizen; today... the shame of the criminal” (197-198). This stigma suggests that African Americans are expected to be criminals because they have been undereducated and treated as inferior. After being liberated from slavery, the education system failed to provide African Americans with the necessary education and experience needed to live lives in which independence and success were fostered. In addition to this injustice, Alexander identifies media representations as another source of oppression. Alexander traces the history of media representations of African Americans to show how this false image has been manufactured. It is this false perception that leads others to believe that African Americans willingly chose to be uneducated, treated unequally and that they want to be criminals.

In chapter four, “The Cruel Hand” Alexander focuses on how the media has taken on the role of portraying African Americans as being “wild”, “vicious”, “overly sexual” or “gangsta”. These images of African Americans suggest to the rest of the American public that African Americans are incapable of providing for themselves or their families. These images perpetuate the myth that African American men strive to be a part of gangs while African American women enable this behavior and protect their men through lying. Alexander explains that television shows, especially those that are black themed, are used to portray African Americans in negative ways. She states “It is a for-profit display of the worst racial stereotypes and images associated with the era of mass incarceration – an era in which black people are criminalized and portrayed as out-of-control, shameless, violent, oversexed, and generally underserving” (173). These examples serve as a reminder that the system of education, which served to oppress African Americans during the era of Jim Crow, now lends itself as a weapon for politicians and news anchors to perpetuate

stigma and the cycle of oppression against African Americans.

Recently, some politicians have highlighted that the oppression of minorities seems too common in America and yet has always existed. Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton, for instance, discuss how white men have consistently striven to maintain power, even at the cost of others’ well-being. What is often missing from these discussions, and what I have highlighted throughout this paper, is how this historically dominant class has used the education system as a tool of oppression toward that end. Systems of oppression, and education as a tool of oppression, have a deep history in the United States. Freire’s banking concept helps highlight how education can be a tool of oppression. Woodson’s work emphasizes how this kind of oppressive education was utilized to place African Americans at a disadvantage compared to White Americans. Laws have changed toward the better, but many Americans still face oppression, especially at the hands of the education system. Alexander explains that because of the lack of education given to African Americans, they are now at higher risk of being fed into a system of mass incarceration. Even as politicians and other privileged groups discuss or attempt to mask this inequality, awareness is the first step to correcting the injustices of an education system that fails to foster critical thinking and help all strive to better themselves, their families, and pursue happiness.

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# Stop and Frisk

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*Jonathan Astacio*

**Course: Ethics and Community Engagement (PHIL 2400)**

**Professor: Elizabeth Victor, Philosophy**

**Student: Jonathan Astacio**

**Research Essay: Stop and Frisk**

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment required students to research and write a short essay exploring an ethical situation, including a detailed description of the situation; a discussion of those responsible for it; the conflicts and values, and traditions and principles involved in the situation; and an account of the ethical decision the student would have made in the situation.

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The New York Police Department (NYPD) Stop, Question and Frisk program, more commonly known as Stop and Frisk, is a practice of the NYPD where police officers stop pedestrians deemed suspicious, then frisk them for weapons, drugs, and other contrabands. Bill Bratton conceived of the practice during his tenure as the New York Police commissioner in the 1990's under then mayor Rudy Giuliani. Bratton conceptualized it with a heavy influence from James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling's "Broken Window Theory". The theory states that preventing petty crimes such as vandalism, public drinking, and public urination will create social order, which would ultimately prevent more serious crimes from happening. Bratton and Giuliani both

credit the implementation of their "zero-tolerance" policies for the reduction of crime in New York during the 90's and early 2000's. The Stop and Frisk program grew substantially under Giuliani's successor, Michael Bloomberg, in 2002. Since then, the practice has been criticized for its lack of effectiveness, racial bias, and creating a hostile relationship between pedestrians and police officers. This paper aims to analyze arguments used for and against the implementation of the Stop and Frisk program in New York City. It will explore ethical problems such as racial bias within New York's law enforcement, and question the effectiveness of policies like Stop and Frisk. The goal of this paper is to compare the Rights and Responsibilities lens and

Relationship lens to ultimately argue that Stop and Frisk is ineffective and unethical.

Stop and Frisk has been met with debate. People who are against the practice often cite the lack of evidence that shows its effectiveness. Between 2002, when Bloomberg took office, and 2012, Stop and Frisk stops rose by a staggering 600%. During that same span, murders dropped about 8%<sup>1</sup>. To put the insignificance of that drop into context, in 2012 after U.S. District Court Judge Shira Scheindlin ruled the practice unconstitutional, there were 150,000 fewer stops by police officers. Even with less use of Stop and Frisk, the murder rate continued to drop another 6%. During Bloomberg's tenure, crime rates reduced by 29%; many attributed that to the increase in practicing Stop and Frisk. However, when examining crime rates in other big cities, it's worth noting their rates dropped at the same rate or more without Stop and Frisk. In Los Angeles, crime dropped 59% without the use of Stop and Frisk. In Baltimore, the numbers were nearly 37%. Many will argue the true goal of Stop and Frisk is to find firearms and tackle gun violence before it happens. It is estimated that only 0.2% of stops yielded any firearms. This is especially troubling when white suspects are more likely to carry a firearm, yet nearly 90% of Stop and Frisk searches are people of color<sup>2</sup>.

Stop and Frisk has been a controversial practice that has invaded people's privacy and heightened public distrust toward the NYPD. While Stop and Frisk impedes on the constitutional rights of everyone in the city, no demographic has been affected more than Black and Latino populations. Since 2002, Blacks and Latinos were stopped nearly 90% of the time during Stop and Frisk stops. Only 10% of searches were on White people. However, during that same time, nearly 90% of civilians stopped were innocent<sup>3</sup>. After Judge Scheindlin ruled the practice unconstitutional, and deemed it "indirect racial profiling," Bloomberg responded by saying most violent crimes happen in Black and Latino neighborhoods. His comments

echoed those of Bratton and Giuliani, and illuminated the racial bias latent in the NYPD practices. Less than 2% of Blacks and Hispanics were found carrying firearms, while double the amount of Whites were found with a firearm<sup>4</sup>. The numbers are similar for drug offenses. Of the 26,000 stops for marijuana made in 2012, only 9% were made on Whites. This is especially troubling when studies have shown Whites to use recreational drugs at the same rate, and at times more, than their Black and Latino counterparts<sup>5</sup>.

Against the backdrop of such unsettling statistics, one can begin to see the injustice in play. The Relationship lens elucidates the lack of impartiality inherent in this policy. The Relationship lens highlights the importance of community equality and the effects a practice has on said community. It is imperative that there is fair treatment and justice that is equally distributed. Under Stop and Frisk, people of color were stopped at a much higher rate and were actively targeted compared to Whites. This creates an unfair system that is disproportionate in that a specific demographic takes a bigger burden, particularly those who might be otherwise disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

On the other hand, from the Rights and Responsibilities lens, one would argue that, if people are following the rules and laws there is nothing to fear during a stop and search. This lens emphasizes the individual and puts the responsibility of their shortcomings on their person. With it, people believe that motive justifies the method, and that any success

<sup>1</sup> Eterno, Mike Bloomberg's Fact-free Defence of Stop-and-frisk

<sup>2</sup> Stop and Frisk Facts | New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) - American Civil Liberties Union of New York State

<sup>3</sup> Stop and Frisk Facts | New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) - American Civil Liberties Union of New York State

<sup>4</sup> Paddock, NYPD Cops Seized Nearly 400 Guns during Stop-and-frisk in past Year

<sup>5</sup> Rayman, NYPD Biased Against Blacks in Marijuana-Related Stops, Civil Liberties Group Analysis Suggests

in stopping crime is enough to allow the practice to continue. So long as anyone is caught doing illegal activities, Stop and Frisk would be considered successful. 0.2% of people will be found with guns during a search; while that percentage is insignificant, those using the Rights and Responsibilities lens would argue that that is 0.2% less guns on the street that were confiscated under the Stop and Frisk practice. The ethical perspective of the individual takes precedence over the equal treatment of people as a whole. The Relationship lens would criticize the Rights and Responsibility lens' emphasis on the individual and argue that a community built on equality and equal distribution of resources is of greater priority. The Relationship lens would also argue that another flaw to this system is the lack of transparency. It took seven years for the startling number of Stop and Frisks to be disclosed, resulting in public backlash. The backlash was a result of the disproportionate use of

Stop and Frisk on communities of color. Even prior to 2012, when Stop and Frisk practices were deemed unconstitutional; New York City's anti-crime practices have been criticized for sweeping the corruption on the part of law enforcement under the rug. In this way, Stop and Frisk seems to signal a deep-seated culture of corruption within the NYPD. This has resulted in a racially driven policy that has disenfranchised residents in communities of color. Stop and Frisk has been a topic of lengthy debate. Some have argued for its implementation and stand behind the (few) positive results from it. However, statistics have shown little or no correlation between Stop and Frisk and a decrease in crime. Moreover, Stop and Frisk heightens racial bias in the NYPD, which had a negative effect on the community at large. The practice is unethical and racially motivated, and has created a hostile environment between law enforcement and communities of color.

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# If at First You Don't Deceive, Try, Try Again

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*Thomas C. Carrico*

**Course:** Experiences in Literature (ENG 1500)

**Professor:** Tara Moyle

**Student:** Thomas C. Carrico

**Research Essay:** If at First You Don't Deceive, Try, Try Again

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment called for a researched essay, exploring a particular aspect from a course reading, in this case connecting a character to psychological traits.

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“Oh, what a tangled web we weave...when first, we practice to deceive.” Sir Walter Scott, not Shakespeare, wrote these oft misquoted lines in 1808, in *Marmion*, two centuries after William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon penned his immortal tragedy *Othello*. But Scott may well have been thinking of Iago and the play *Othello*. Where else does the art of deception, the act of the softly spoken suggestive lie, find a better home than in the mouth of Iago, the master of literary deceit? Iago seems to pull out all stops on his quest to defeat and humiliate Othello, a brother in arms turned traitor. When Iago is passed over in favor of Michael Cassio for first lieutenant under Othello's command, Iago swears revenge. Modern day psychologists may have indeed had Iago in mind when they, collectively, over decades, designated certain tell tale signs of people with pathological traits. Is Iago's use of deception, with the end goal being the destruction of Othello, “the hated Moor,” the acts of a pathological maniac? If he is pathological, what traits does he exhibit and in what ways does he use his nefarious skills to deceive Othello?

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) first identified the criteria for psychopathic disorders after World War II, publishing their findings in 1952. Since then, they have published three updated manuals with clarifications as new symptoms are documented. The Criteria for Psychopathic Personality Disorder, specifically states 10 traits of a psychopath. The first five, fit our Iago like a glove (no, not that glove). They are: 1) Glib and superficial 2) Inflated and arrogant self-appraisal. 3) Lacks remorse 4) Lacks empathy 5) Deceitful and manipulative. These traits coupled with the actions of a spurned lover paint a portrait of a scheming human being who goes all the way to his own death to bring down a friend, someone who is noble in everyone's eyes including his own. Iago's deceiving of Othello incorporates so many people that, literarily speaking, it is a marvel to watch unfold. Iago's psyche, saturated with pride, encompasses all five of the above traits of a psychopath. However, not all of them are clearly evident all the time, as he wears many masks. The deception hinges on the fact that Othello is duped into

thinking Iago a trusted confidant and an honest man. But when the fourth wall is omitted, the audience benefits the most from Iago as his inner thoughts and devious intentions are revealed in the form of monologues and soliloquies.

It may be safe to assume that when the play begins, Iago has only a general plan, nothing really concrete. With Iago's first victim Roderigo at his side, together they call to Brabantio, Desdemona's father, to warn him about her romantic involvement with "an old black ram [who] is tupping your white ewe" (Schlib 745, 88). He doesn't seem to mind using vulgarity in the presence of a senator, someone used to respect, nor anyone else if it suits his plan. Iago is a prideful man who doesn't like to be patronized, in fact, he will be the one talking down to people he feels are under him. His plan that night is to stir up Brabantio's household where Desdemona should be sleeping. He does this because he feels Othello has slighted him, in passing him over for promotion to lieutenant under his command. Iago warns the senator, "I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (Schlib 746, 116). Notice the use of pronouns here. The senator refers to Iago as one does a stranger with the formal "thou" while Iago addresses the senator with "you." In Elizabethan language, as was the case with all romantic languages of that time and even now, the use of pronouns determined not only how one addressed a stranger but how one would feel regarding his station in life, i.e. superior or below them. Another important article, *Iago-An Extraordinary Honest Man* written by Weston Babcock, delves into Iago's use of the "thou" and "you" and makes it clear how Shakespeare wanted the audience to infer how Iago felt about himself in relation to other characters. Babcock affirms, "The play opens with lines in which Roderigo uses thou to Iago and Iago replies with *you*. To an Elizabethan audience, those lines would have immediately determined the comparative social rank

of the two men. Roderigo was probably using *thou* in friendly familiarity but for Iago to reply to one of Roderigo's gentlemanly class with the same word would have been presumptuous or insulting." Babcock goes on to say, "Iago consistently uses *you* to Roderigo, and Roderigo *thou* to Iago, until, in the final lines of Act I, sc.iii. Iago sees Roderigo utterly downcast at his loss of Desdemona and persuades him to follow the wars as a common soldier under his command. Then, to use a colloquialism, Iago has Roderigo where he wants him; and from this point to the end of the play Iago always addresses Roderigo with *thou*, or uses its variants. Roderigo has subordinated himself, and Iago takes every opportunity to insult him" (Babcock, 298-299). This probably incensed Iago, addressing someone he felt superior to by having to use what was considered to be proper familiarity.

Lying is a psychopath's calling card according to Hervey Cleckley, author, *The Mask of Sanity*, published in 1941. He states, "One gets the impression that he (Iago) is incapable of ever attaining realistic comprehension of an attitude in other people which causes them to value truth and cherish truthfulness in themselves" (West 32). Iago, in Cleckley's mind, does not possess the basic attributes needed for empathetic sensibilities, nor does he seem to care. He ignores the tugs of conscience that would plague the ordinary human being. Telling the truth or at the very least feeling shame for all the half truths he tells, may not bother someone who exhibits an arrogant self-appraisal, feeling above everyone else-- one of the five traits from the DSM IV table.

One may wonder how Iago could change his attitude so quickly from love to hate concerning Othello. This was a man Iago was glad to follow into battle, possibly die for. One cannot underestimate the power of a delusional arrogant mind, however, and of their allegiances to people in authority. To make clear to the audience his fickle duty to Othello, Iago simply states, "I follow him to serve my own turn upon him. We



cannot all be master, nor all masters be truly followed” (Schlib 744, 42). This is significant because he states he follows Othello for his own will, for his own vengeance to be served. Perhaps he has grown weary of ever being the servant. Iago offers the audience the first glimpse into what is clearly a defiant statement, marking his territory and pledging allegiance to himself. Iago takes pride in Othello’s unabashed opinion that Iago is to him “honest Iago” and deserves that badge of honor because he has earned it. But it is from Iago’s own mouth that we find out what he thinks of himself and this is perhaps as honest as he is capable of being. He claims, “...I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at; I am not what I am” (Schlib 745, 64). This means he is bent on being the consummate actor, keeping his true thoughts and feelings to himself, to see his plan through, because deep down he knows and embraces the fact that he is not “honest Iago.” From the Fred West article, Iago the psychopath, again, Checkley observes, “The psychopath seems “sweetly free” of any doubts that his behavior is perfectly compatible with normal standards of morality, reliability, and so on...he has no real insight into his own true nature, and hence it would never occur to him to inquire if he were evil or malignant. Also, he projects his own views and shallowness of affect upon others, so he has no reason for making an unfavorable evaluation of himself against anyone else. Only in matters of intelligence does he see any difference: he considers himself more complex and more intelligent than anyone around him” (West, 30). Clearly, this is another prime example of his lack of self awareness, and delusional self-appraisal. It may also be necessary to add that Iago does arrive at the conclusion, in the “How am I a villain” monologue, that if he is evil, he is undoubtedly justified and will act accordingly. This is frightening and leads the reader to assume that Iago knows exactly what he is doing and doesn’t care about the consequences. He will proceed unhampered by sentiment as planned.

But how thoroughly has his plan been thought out? Iago throughout the play makes use of chance happenings that no one could predict. He thinks quickly on his feet and is hardly ever caught without a quick line or two to save his neck. “As Coleridge said, Iago is motiveless. His motives-or excuses- come more as afterthoughts, not as stimuli toward the heinous actions he perpetrates. Like the psychopath described by Cleckley, Iago is impulsive, but he sees nothing basically wrong with his own behavior, no matter how erratic or antisocial; therefore, he doesn’t bother to find or invent excuses unless prodded” (West, 30-31). This glibness, another trait of the psychopath, is reserved at times for poor, hapless Roderigo. When everyone hears of Brabantio’s blessing for Othello’s marriage to Desdemona, secret as it was, Roderigo is distraught and implores Iago for his help. Iago assures him that soon she will see the error of her ways and will be free of Othello and be free to be with Roderigo. Roderigo exits happily content to sell his land, whereby Iago remarks that he fills his purse with money from such fools by making sport of them. He then says, “I hate the Moor; and it is thought abroad that ‘twixt my sheets h’as done my office. I know not if’t be true; but I, for mere suspicion in that kind, will do as if for surety” (Schlib 760-761, 364). It means little if his wife, Emilia, has been unfaithful with the Moor; that it is a rumor, is good enough for him. After all, if half lies, suggestions, rumors are his game then perhaps in his mind it makes it all fair. This is where Iago starts to plot his deception of Othello and win his position as lieutenant from Cassio. His pot simmering, his plan unfolding before his eyes and ears, Iago states plainly that “Cassio’s a proper man” (Schlib 761, 370). He is good-looking, that everyone would believe Cassio is a lady killer, especially and more importantly that Othello believes it. He says further, “The Moor is of a free and open nature that thinks men honest that but seem to be so; and will has tenderly be led by th’ nose as asses are” (Schlib 761, 377). He is keen on manipulating an honest and open natured man. Iago is taking advan-

tage of the trust that has built the honest relationship, in Othello's eyes, in the first place. That takes a cold resolve, and shows a total lack of remorse to follow through with a plan to, that even in its budding form, portrays him as a deceitful man.

After he loses his rank for drunkenness and fighting, Iago feigns loyalty to Cassio, letting Othello decide who to believe, saying, "I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth than it should do offense to Michael Cassio..." (Schlib 775, 198) Iago, no matter what apostate of Hell he appears to align himself with seems to be proclaiming Cassio's innocence. But is he? Or is he hoping Othello believes Iago's careful word choice is protecting Cassio's honor by not really saying yes or no? Iago, ever the ego-maniac, actually believes himself doing good for Cassio, saying, "And what's he that says I play the villain, when this advice is free I give and honest, probal to thinking, and indeed the course to win the Moor again" (Schlib 777, 293). However, Iago's supposed good nature doesn't last. He admits, "When devils will the blackest sins put on, they do suggest at first with heavenly shows, as I do now" (Schlib 777, 308). He allows himself the privilege of aligning himself with a deity of some sort, whether it be good or evil, devil or God. When he says, "I am not what I am," one may be reminded of what God told Moses on Mt. Sinai. Moses asked God, "Who should I say sent me [to Pharoah]?" God responds, "I am that I am." Iago affirms in his speech that he is defining his character as one opposite or antithetical in nature to God. That is a delusional and one of the five traits.

It suggests because of the gravity of the statement, that this is someone who knows exactly what he is saying. But whether he is God or devil, Iago still needs help. For even though Iago has Cassio convinced that he needs Desdemona's blessing, Iago still needs Othello to see them together and all the better if his wife Emilia speaks well on Cassio's behalf to her mistress, Desdemona. Iago will even go as far to manipulate, again one of the five traits of a psychopath, his own

wife. Whether he and she have a close relationship, this is someone he supposedly has a close relationship with, a bond shared. Does this mean that he is duping her also? Perhaps Emilia has seen his true colors from time to time when she in a revealing monologue says, "Let husbands know their wives have sense like them... what is it they do when they change us for others? Is it sport? I think it is...And have not we affections, desires for sport, and frailty as men have? Then let them use us well; else let them know, the ills we do, their ills instruct us so" (Schlib 815, 89). This is a powerful quote from Emilia as it implies that she is wise and has seen her fair share of men's mistreatment of women, perhaps suffering at Iago's hand as well. Deep in her heart she knows men to be capable of deceit and Iago is no different. This explains her reluctance and refusal to come to Iago's defense when he really needs it at the end. She puts things together quickly and is adamant in her declarations of his guilt. Who else knows Iago as intimately as does Emilia? She is someone who should be defending her honest Iago and yet she does not and everyone learns why when Iago kills her.

Like the murderer who returns to the scene of the crime, Act III finds Iago sub-consciously having a little bit of sport with Othello, which reveals his lack of empathy, another element in the definition of psychopathology. He cannot resist giving Othello a glimpse into the real mind and nature of honest Iago. He relays, "Men should be what they seem, or those that be not, would they might seem none" (Schlib 784, 127). He is basically confessing that all are not who they seem to be, including himself, his most trusted friend, Iago. Because Othello is so focused on Cassio at this point the little clue Iago proffers escapes him. It is time for Iago to move in for the kill. Othello has been trusting of his wife up until now but one can see that Iago's suggestions and mostly that is all they have been, have started to work on Othello. Iago whispers, "O, beware my Lord of jealousy, the green-eyed monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on" (Schlib 785, 165).

This is not the first time jealousy has been mentioned but at this point, when Othello is ready to believe Iago, it works. Othello asks for proof, ocular proof, he calls it. “I speak not yet of proof...Look to your wife” (Shakespeare 785, 196). He cannot speak of proof because he hasn’t any, not yet. But this doesn’t stop him from crossing a line, actually going so far as to accuse, through suggestion, that Desdemona has been an unfaithful wife. Iago has reached the point of no return and what is so unconscionable is that he has brought so many unsuspecting souls with him. This is yet again proof of a lack of remorse. After Iago suggests that Cassio has laid with his wife, Iago now goes for the jugular and does not let up. Othello’s jealous mind is racing and Iago shows him no mercy. He exclaims: “Work on, my medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught...” (Schlib 800, 43). According to Dr. David Bernstein, a psychologist being interviewed by Alix Spiegel from NPR radio’s podcast of “The Psychopath Test, Spiegel reports, “He explained that a psychopath has no empathy at all, no sense of mercy, no conscience. They don’t experience love.” Bernstein went on to explain, “They could tell you what these things [the tell tale traits of a psychopath] mean, particularly the smarter ones, the brighter ones. They could even, the brighter ones, learn to fake it. But they could not experience it [love]” (Spiegel, podcast). This is what perplexes even psychologists today, that fooling people, people close to you; making believe love is at the core of every feeling they have for their friend, spouse, or lover, is what the really smart psychopaths do. They are masters of deceit. They neither feel love nor the remorse for faking that feeling. They may indeed not be able to help themselves since feelings cannot be dissected like a frog in a lab. Feelings are only truly known by their actions, when perhaps it is too late.

Iago’s next and most crucial proof he needs for Othello’s request for proof, comes from his wife, Emilia who finds, earlier in the action, Desdemona’s handkerchief given to her by Othello. It is something prized by Iago as the “ocular proof” Othello is

demanding. He places it in Cassio’s room where it is eventually found by Cassio’s mistress, Bianca. Othello, in hiding, sees the handkerchief in Cassio’s hand and Othello becomes ensnared once and for all by Iago’s deception. Othello is beside himself with jealousy as he rages, “Ay, let her rot, and perish and be damned to-night; for she shall not live” (Schlib 803, 167). Othello is good on his word and that evening, in fact, Othello at the behest of Iago strangles his wife in their bed, the bed where the love between Othello and Desdemona was consummated.

Perhaps one of the most debated parts of this play as far as Iago is concerned is the silence, the “fifth amendment” he chooses to invoke at the end of the play, after Desdemona is found to be murdered at Othello’s hands. Emilia, his own wife, finds out the truth from Othello of how Iago mislead him throughout and in a rage Iago murders her. When he is questioned as to why he wanted to deceive so many people, wreak emotional and physical havoc to such an extent, he remains silent. He coolly offers, “Demand me nothing. What you know, you know. From this time forth I never will speak no word” (Schlib 828, 303). How unfeeling, how unremorseful, how unsympathetic could one human being be?

What enables all free men to act as they choose? Free will. In Shakespeare’s day, Elizabethan England was suffering, in their minds, with an influx of the Jesuits and their ideology that pitted man against his conscience in the form of reason—low reason and high reason. Daniel Stempel, author of “The Silence of Iago,” theorizes that Shakespeare used Iago to voice the opinion of the common Englishman and his urge to separate his beliefs from that of the Catholic Church. This belief proposed that he would continually suffer and live in an unenlightened world that separated him from God if he chose to use his free will if it laid in total contrast to the will of God. The Jesuit upheld this view which led Shakespeare to infuse his belief along with his fellow Englishman into the likes

of Iago and the waste he left in his path. Stempel goes on to say, "...Iago, the champion of the absolute autonomy of the will, shows no remorse, but simply withdraws behind a wall of defiant indifference after he has lost his power to manipulate circumstances. If he is no longer free to act, he is at least free not to act, to remain silent and unmoved by accusations and threats" (Stempel, 258).

To determine whether Iago is a psychopath, one would have to look at the evidence of what he produced in his twenty-eight years. One wonders how Iago would have fared if, say, Lodovico, could have administered a psychopathic test, since he was someone who was the least touched by Iago's deceptions. Can it come down to a test? After all, if the truly cerebral psychopath knows himself, as Iago does profess throughout the play, a test that relies on honesty and willingness to share personal information from a subject like Iago may prove to be incomplete and therefore inconclusive, as was evidenced of inmate Robert Dixon in the NPR podcast. To be fair, Iago

held down a job, fought and survived war, held down a position in Othello's army, and seemed to be well liked, albeit unknown really, by all who were acquainted with him. His flaw of course, like most psychopaths, is that he didn't handle rejection very well. Perhaps the inspiration for Iago's character came in the form, to Shakespeare, from an unemployed actor in his troupe who stayed unemployed because of his tendency and love for burning down the Globe Theater, at least once. Then again, maybe Iago really is a psychopath, never being able to break free of the prison of narcissism he himself built around him in the shape of bars that appear and reappear of their own free will, or of *his* own free will. However, it is not enough for people to have free will; people will not remember a man for simply having free will to choose, that is God's gift to mankind. Instead, a person will be remembered for the choices he makes using his free will. After all, a tree is known by its fruit.

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# Perception is Reality: Stereoscopic Vision and how 3D Movies Work

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*Kyle Higgins*

**Course:** Perception (PSY 4200)

**Professor:** Gilbert Honigfeld, Psychology

**Student:** Kyle Higgins

**Essay:** Perception is Reality: Stereoscopic Vision and how 3D Movies Work

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## **Assignment:**

In this assignment, students were asked to choose a one-word topic and relate it to the discussions of the course, while expanding on the theme of perception. Kyle Higgins chose, “movies” as his topic.

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‘Let’s go to the movies!’ This is a go-to first date move for many singles. Not only is it casual and comfortable, but neither party feels pressure to entertain their date, as they can let the movie do the talking. Because of this, going to the movies has been a world-wide pastime since its invention in the 1890s and through the introduction of sound in films in 1927 and the present day. Taking advantage of the human brain’s tendency to find continuity and movement in its surroundings, movies use still images projected in rapid succession to trick our visual perception system into seeing movement that isn’t actually occurring. As technology has improved, motion pictures have advanced from short news updates to multi-sensory, out-of-body, virtual reality experiences. Sound has advanced to such a level that viewers feel surrounded by the events in the films, and some theaters have even started using smells to further blur the lines

between spectator and participant in the minds of filmgoers. With that said, arguably the single greatest advancement in film history is the introduction of 3D filming and the 3D film watching experience. Like sound and color technology in films, 3D film technology has come a long way since its inception in the 1950s, catapulting it from a cumbersome gimmick to a near necessity for ticket buyers. However, the most interesting thing about 3D movies may not be what it does to the visual perception of a film, but how it does it.

When humans view the environment around us, we use certain tricks and shortcuts to make sense of what objects are present and what they are doing, called heuristics. One such trick involves size perception. We use apparent changes of size in objects whose size we generally know to determine changes of distance, and

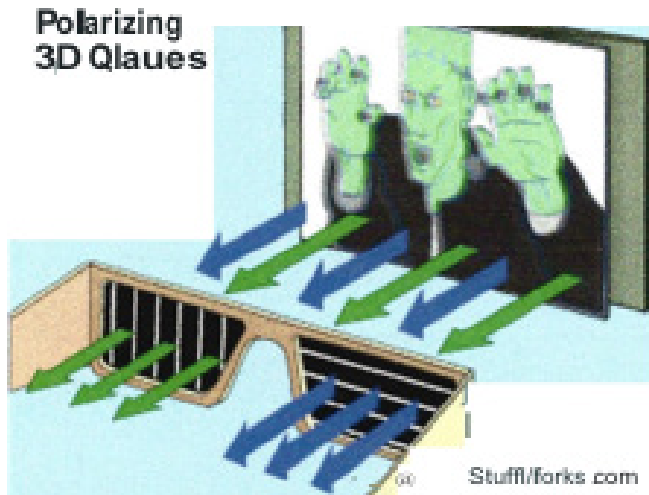
vice versa (Goldstein, 2014). If an object is seemingly getting smaller, our past history tells us that that object is more likely moving away from us in distance than actually shrinking in size. Another trick we use is shadows. Shadows can help us determine where objects are oriented around each other based off of our knowledge of light sources (Goldstein, 2014). However, one of our most important visual heuristics, especially as it pertains to distance and 3D viewing, is based off of stereoscopic vision (Krystek, 1997). This term refers to the process by which humans use the presence of two viewing sources, or our two eyes, to determine object motion in a 3D environment. Our brains use the slightly different angles by which our eyes are viewing objects, comparing them and quickly calculating distances and changes in distance. 3D filmmakers cleverly exploit this heuristic by filming the movies with dual cameras at slightly differing angles, mimicking how our eyes would watch a scene unfold in the real world (Institute, 2010). By replicating the stereoscopic visual system, it is possible to project the contents filmed by both cameras onto a screen simultaneously, and the only missing link is tricking each eye into seeing only its corresponding camera's images.



Originally, the isolation of each eye's perception was accomplished by using color filtered eyeglasses which the viewer would wear whilst watching the film. One camera would film using a green filter, and the other a red one, so that when a viewer watched the film with one eye's lens being red and the other's green, the portion of the film displayed through the corresponding camera's color would be invisible, and each eye would only perceive the opposite projection (Institute, 2010). This did a good job of copying the stereoscopic visual process, but it also greatly hampered the color display of the film. In short, movies could be 3D, but not necessarily realistic. For this reason, most filmmakers stayed away from this technique and continued to produce 2D films, especially as color technology developed and became increasingly realistic and vibrant (Institute, 2010). This explains the drastic downward trend of 3D filmmaking for the rest of the 20th century. If 3D movies were going to make a comeback, it would only come after a new technique for isolating the eyes was developed and implemented.

Luckily for moviegoers everywhere, polarized filter technology drastically changed the process with which our stereoscopic visual system was exploited by 3D movie creators. Polarization of light deals with the direction from which light comes, and thus the direction from which it is perceived by the eye (Institute, 2010). The sun's light is not polarized naturally, and that is why sunglasses often use polarizing filters to deflect the sun's light from directly hitting the eye. Basically, polarized 3D glasses expanded on the groundwork already laid by the color filter glasses to make a more realistic 3D experience while also not sacrificing color perception (Krystek, 1997). Instead of using cameras that film with a color filter, filmmakers can use cameras that film in different polarizations, and then make corresponding lenses for each eye in the 3D glasses. For example, one camera would film with a horizontal polarization of the light

and the other vertical. The lenses in the glasses would then individually filter out light coming in from the unwanted direction, and thus isolate the visual field for each eye, as seen on the diagram below (Institute, 2010).



With this new development, the 3D movie experience became much more realistic for viewers, and has subsequently risen from a largely unused filmmaker's trick to a wildly popular and often astonishing art form. Now viewers can not only suspend their disbelief

in the story, but feel as if they are experiencing and participating in a reality, as opposed to merely viewing a piece. The technology behind motion pictures has always been based on tricking the human system of visual perception, through the exploitation of perceptual constancy and motion detection heuristics used by the brain to make sense of countless reflections of light onto the retina (Goldstein, 2014). Using dual cameras, polarization of light, and special polarized glasses, filmmakers are now further manipulating the visual system by exploiting one of our greatest visual assets, our stereoscopic vision. Now, not only can we lose ourselves in the story surrounding a film, but also in the visuals presented within it. Going to a movie has transitioned from advanced visual storytelling to a virtual reality experience, where viewers not only connect with characters emotionally, but feel as if they are involved in the scenes and ingrained in the scenery themselves. Not a bad trip to take that potential special someone on for a first date, although if you're looking for a kiss at the end of the night, you may want to stay away from the popcorn, just this once.

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# Book Review, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*

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*Brittany Line*

**Course:** Social Sciences Honors Seminar (SSH 3010)

**Professor:** Neil Kressel

**Student:** Brittany Line

**Research Essay:** Book Review, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*

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## **Assignment:**

This semester, the honors seminar in the social sciences is titled: "Understanding Religion and Religious Extremism: A Multidisciplinary Approach." In addition to assigned readings from sociology, psychology, and political science, students must select two books of

interest from the list on the syllabus. For each book, the student must submit a brief review (approximately 5-7 pages) modeled on those that appear in the *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New Republic*, or in a scholarly journal.

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The opening lines of Harris' book would lead readers to believe that he has set out to condemn religious extremists. His account of a suicide bomber's last day on Earth continues on to describe the smile that he wears as he detonates himself and kills dozens of strangers in the process. His family revels in the fact that he has paved the way for himself to go to heaven and his neighbors celebrate his great accomplishment. Harris then acknowledges that nearly all of his readers can likely automatically assume what the man's religion was.

But this is not really a book about Muslim extremists or even religious extremists in general, but a book which unabashedly condemns religious moderates and the entire notion of religion itself. Harris does so boldly, spending a couple hundred pages denouncing

religion and all of its effects on the modern world. He spends much of his book singling out religious moderates for their liberally-minded 'tolerance.' He is critical of tolerance not as a whole throughout society, but specifically in terms of religious tolerance. Harris repeatedly calls for an end to religious tolerance between the various modern-day religions, arguing that all of these religions are "equally uncontaminated by evidence" and that this lack of logic is not something that we should be in the business of tolerating.

While Harris certainly does condemn religious extremism in all its forms, his ultimate argument revolves around the lack of reason within religion that allows this religious extremism to exist and to flourish, hence the feeling that his book is more about religious



moderates and the tolerance they preach than anything else. He describes this tolerance as “the context in which religious violence can never be adequately opposed.”

With a background in neuroscience and philosophy, Harris’ scientific mind is hard to miss in his unadulterated need for reason and evidence, which he unsurprisingly feels that religion possesses none of. He begins his argument by attempting to demonstrate the absurdity of this complete lack of reason.

“We have names for people who have many beliefs for which there is no rational justification. When their beliefs are extremely common, we call them ‘religious’; otherwise, they are likely to be called ‘mad,’ ‘psychotic’ or ‘delusional.’”

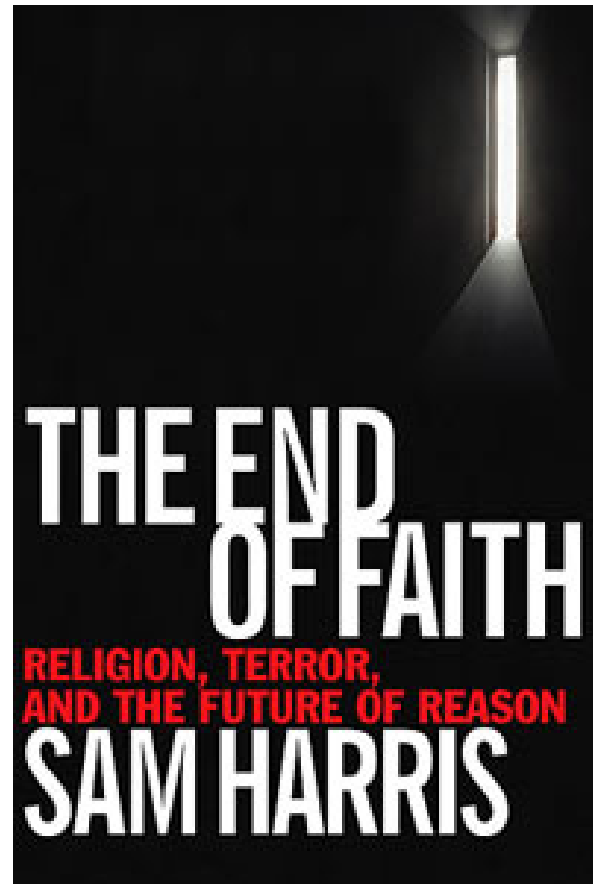
He continues to examine the nature of belief itself, imploring readers to understand how such beliefs can have drastic effects on someone’s existence and thus their actions. Harris asks readers to imagine how their life would suddenly change if they came to believe one of the following propositions:

- 1) You have only two weeks to live.
- 2) You’ve just won a lottery prize of one hundred million dollars.
- 3) Aliens have implanted a receiver in your skull and are manipulating your thoughts.

Obviously, believing in these words would unquestionably inform your desires, fears, expectations, and subsequent behavior. Harris argues that believing in religion has the same effect.

“A belief is a lever that, once pulled, moves almost everything else in a person’s life.”

Harris goes on to argue that in order for beliefs to be useful, they must be logically coherent and grounded in reality. Since he feels that there is no reason within or evidence of religious beliefs, he concludes that the danger of religion lies in the fact that “it allows otherwise normal human beings to reap the fruits of



madness and consider them holy.”

To those who argue that there must be some sanity in religion considering the sheer number of people that subscribe to such beliefs, Harris retorts that it is “merely an accident of history that it is considered normal in our society to believe that the Creator of the universe can hear your prayers, while it is demonstrative of mental illness to believe that he is communicating with you by having the rain tap in Morse code on your bedroom window.”

Clearly not one to sugarcoat, Harris outright blames religious moderates for their creation of a culture that supports and accepts such beliefs, which in Harris’ eyes subsequently breeds religious extremism. He explains

how given the technologies that have created weapons of mass destruction, it is more important now than ever to evaluate how religion informs extremist behaviors and to criticize these religions accordingly.

“Criticizing a person’s faith is currently taboo in every corner of our culture...criticizing a person’s ideas about God and the afterlife is thought to be impolitic in a way that criticizing his ideas about physics or history is not.”

While Harris makes it very clear that he believes that all religion is fundamentally flawed and should be condemned and subsequently eradicated, he singles out Islam when speaking about the threats of nuclear weapons in the hands of religious individuals, making his book all the more controversial.

In his typical scathing fashion, Harris describes Islam as being a “cult of death” and directly links common Islamic teachings to acts of terrorism such as 9/11. Always one to insist on the necessity of evidence, Harris includes quotations from the Koran that call for the use of violence and hard data to support his argument.

He presents data from the Pew Research Center which demonstrates that a significant percentage of Muslims in the Middle East would justify suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilian targets as a legitimate tactic for defending Islam from its enemies. It is this fact along with the increased use of mass weapons of destruction that has Harris concerned about the fate of the world should Islam be allowed to continue to exist.

“Notions of martyr-dom and jihad run roughshod over the logic that allowed the United States and the Soviet Union to pass half a century perched, more or less stably, on the brink of Armageddon...we must come to terms with the possibility that men who are every bit as zealous to die as the nineteen hijackers may one day get their hands on long-range nuclear weaponry. The Muslim world in particular must anticipate this

possibility and find some way to prevent it.”

Yet while Harris certainly emphasizes the dangers posed by Islam and Islamic extremists, he bears warnings for Christians as well.

“We can no longer ignore the fact that billions of our neighbors believe in the metaphysics of martyrdom, or in the literal truth of the book of Revelation,” he states, “because our neighbors are now armed with chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.”

Harris goes through a run down of Christianity that ultimately supports the notion that most atrocities done in the name of Christianity have not been ones committed by people who have strayed far from their religion, but rather by those who have followed Christian doctrine in its most literal form. He cites the Inquisition, the persecution of witches, and even the Holocaust as direct results of religious influence and recorded religious doctrine.

Whether they be Muslims, Christians, or any other type of religion, Harris tries to convince his readers that none of these religious fundamentalists are misinterpreting their respective religious texts or misusing their faith for their personal agendas. Rather, they are actually taking their religion very seriously and following the texts to their exact word as the texts advise them to do in order to properly assert their faith. The fact that these texts inform such behaviors underscores Harris’ entire argument regarding the sickness that is religion.

But as Harris is well-versed in philosophy and the human mind, he does acknowledge the human need for a mystical dimension to life. Harris insists that this mystical dimension can be approached rationally and does not have to consist of illogical anecdotes and almighty men living in the sky, but instead can be achieved through things like meditation and reflection. Harris yearns for people to understand that the things we seek from higher powers, such as guidance and forgiveness, are things that we can find within ourselves

and within those around us.

“The only angels we need invoke are those of our better nature: reason, honesty, and love. The only demons we must fear are those that lurk inside every human mind: ignorance, hatred, greed, and faith, which is surely the devil’s masterpiece.”

Harris’ prose are certainly not going to be enjoyed by someone who is easily offended when their faith is put into question, but it is exactly these type of people that Harris wants reading his book. He sets out to convince readers that tolerance of religion is poisoning the world, thus it is those who support and demonstrate this tolerance that he wants listening to his unapologetically intolerant argument.

If you are not willing to be open-minded and to bear your faith being questioned, criticized, and ultimately condemned, you will not make it past the first page. Harris can be brutal in his tone and frequently utilizes biting sarcasm as he expresses his argument. While that tactic may work well in a conversation with like-minded individuals, it generally is not very effective when trying to change someone’s mind, especially when it comes to something so drastic as abandoning

one’s religion. Harris likely would have fared much better with this book had he controlled his temper a bit better.

But nonetheless, I think that this book is an important one that is well worth your time if you can bear Harris’ superiority complex. Sarcasm and condescension aside, Harris’ argument is valid. We as a society have deemed religious beliefs as acceptable despite their clear lack of logic and reason. And the more we continue to tolerate these beliefs, the more we support the extremism that the religions which they come from dictate to their followers.

One ultimately cannot whisper about the man who believes in unicorns while worshipping similarly unseen and unheard beings. At least unicorns pose no threat to modern day society (as far as we know). But Harris’ argument is really not one to make jokes about – his concerns about how religion informs people’s actions and how these actions now include weapons of mass destruction are concerns not to be ignored. I reckon it would be a smart thing for us all to try and get over the offense caused by Harris’ words and assess his core arguments about religion now before it is too late.

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## References:

*The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*, Sam Harris. 336 pp.; W.W. Norton & Company.

# Children's Year and its Effect on Child Welfare

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*Rachel Lopardo*

**Course:** Historical Methods (HIST 2600)

**Professor:** David Koistinen

**Student:** Rachel Lopardo

**Essay:** Children's Year and its Effect on Child Welfare

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment was created for HIST 2600-Historical Methods, a required course for history majors which teaches essential research and writing skills. The centerpiece of the class is a research paper of at least twelve pages, which makes substantial use of primary sources (materials created during the period under

study). Students in this section of HIST 2600 were advised to write about any topic in twentieth-century U.S. history, while ensuring topics were narrowed down to something focused enough and on which meaningful primary-source research was able to be carried out.

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During the early years of World War I, the infant mortality rate was significantly higher than today's standards. Americans were trying to stay out of the war and the international problem of high infant mortality was not considered a pressing issue. Yet, one government bureau's main work was centered on aiding those dying infants. The Children's Bureau constantly worked on new ways to inform mothers and communities on what could be done to lower the infant death rate. When the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917, the Children's Bureau set up a year-long campaign to help infants and children during wartime, called the Children's Year. The campaign set out to save a third of the babies who died each year, but the events preceding and following the Children's Year campaign, such as infant mortality studies, Baby Weeks, World War I, European successes, Child Welfare Standards Conference, and government pamphlets, were more significant to the child welfare cause than the campaign itself.

The Children's Bureau's creation was a collaboration between various parties all working toward the same goal. The idea of having a government agency dedicated solely to the welfare of children began in specific relief agencies and state boards around the country early in the twentieth century<sup>1</sup>. Before this time, there was no specific division of Government where issues with children were dealt with. Additionally, children were not typically seen as a child, instead being viewed as a small adult. The concept of "childhood" was fairly new, and thus people realized that it needed to be protected. In 1909, 200 leaders (both men and women) and people from around the country met at the White House for a conference on the Care of Dependent Children and petitioned for a federal bureau on child welfare. President Theodore Roosevelt was immediately convinced of the need for a

<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline K. Parker, "Julia Lanthrop and the Children's Bureau: The Emergence of an Institution," *Social Service Review* 55 (Mar. 1981): 60, accessed October 7, 2015 from jstor

child welfare bureau and endorsed the proposal in front of Congress<sup>2</sup>. The congressional mandate was not approved until 1912, however, when President William Howard Taft formally signed the Children's Bureau into creation<sup>3</sup>. The Bureau's job was to investigate "upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people."<sup>4</sup>

President Taft appointed Julia C. Lathrop as the chief of the Children's Bureau, who stayed in this position until 1921<sup>5</sup>. Lathrop graduated with Hull House creator Jane Addams and stayed and worked at Hull House for twenty years. Lathrop did not play a part in the fight to establish the Children's Bureau and she did not campaign to be in this position; she was nominated to lead the Bureau and agreed.<sup>6</sup> Her first order of business was to conduct research on the infant mortality rate.<sup>7</sup> From 1912-1918, the Children's Bureau worked toward researching why the infant and maternal death rate was so high and what they could do to fix it. At this time, the infant death rate was 175.9 infant deaths per 1,000 births. This early work led to the creation of formal birth registrations and various pamphlets on maternal and infant care.<sup>9</sup>

The work that the Children's Bureau completed in the early years of its existence had a huge influence on the creation of the Children's Year during World War I. The research on infant mortality brought to light how preventable infant death was. The majority of infant deaths each year were found to have been caused by poor care during pregnancy and after birth. Two fifths of these infants died within their first three weeks.<sup>10</sup> The Children's Bureau tried to distribute this information, but they ran into the problem of reaching the people of low-income communities. How could pamphlets and brochures about infant care reach people who were illiterate? This problem, along with the information they gathered in the infant mortality studies, directly led to the creation of Baby-Weeks.<sup>11</sup>

A Baby-Week was a way to bring people's attention to the scientific reasons why so many infants perished

before their first birthday.<sup>12</sup> The Bureau called for communities of all sizes to hold a Baby-Week and get the community involved in the nation's future. The Children's Bureau, in their pamphlet about Baby-Weeks, stated that the purpose of a community holding a Baby-Week was to give parents a way to learn about the infant mortality rate and for the community as a whole to understand the importance of infant welfare.<sup>13</sup> In this same pamphlet, the Bureau provides guidelines on how to hold a successful Baby-Week, including the type of facility needed and templates of handouts to provide at each meeting. The Bureau would also send representatives and volunteers to help with the campaign. Every Baby-Week had a set program on what would be accomplished each day. Some of the

<sup>2</sup> Parker, "Julia Lathrop and the Children's Bureau," 60.

<sup>3</sup> Parker, "Julia Lathrop and the Children's Bureau," 60.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy E. Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action for Children: A History of the Children's Bureau* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1926), 1.

<sup>5</sup> "Twenty Years of the Children's Bureau," *Social Service Review* 6 (Mar. 1932): 140, accessed on October 7, 2015 from jstor.

<sup>6</sup> Kriste Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood:" *The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare 1912-46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 28.

<sup>7</sup> "Twenty Years," 140.

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mortality Statistics 1912*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1913: 12, accessed on November 10, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> "Twenty Years," 140.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Save the Youngest: Seven Charts on Infant Mortality with explanatory comments*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1919, accessed on October 4, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Baby-Week Campaigns: Suggestions for Communities of Various Sizes*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1915: 5, accessed on October 8, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Baby-Week Campaigns*, 7-8.

events held over the week included school programs to educate children on familial care, outings to local parks, and inspections of doctor's offices, health centers, and grocery stores.<sup>14</sup>

Baby-Week reached communities large and small all over the United States and the reception was unanimously positive. The first Baby-Week, held in Chicago during April of 1914, illustrated exactly how the week should progress. The citizens of Chicago came together as a community to make Baby-Week successful and continued working on infant welfare long after the week ended.<sup>15</sup> This was what made Baby-Weeks so influential. The festivities only lasted a week but the welfare work never stopped. These campaigns brought to light the issue of infant mortality and how easily it could be prevented. The Children's Bureau provided the information to the cities, and the cities used it to start making a difference. Baby-Week campaigns led to baby parades where the babies who were well taken care of would receive prizes.<sup>16</sup> Then Better-Baby contests popped up at county fairs, where babies were judged like cattle and were awarded first, second, and third place ribbons.<sup>17</sup> The Children's Bureau did not necessarily approve of these contests, but then again it showed them that the country was starting to understand that the infant mortality rate was a serious issue. Infant mortality statistics show that the infant death rate fell from 179.0 deaths per 1,000 births in 1912 to 172.7 deaths in 1914, a new low for the United States.<sup>18</sup> The execution of these community campaigns brought the seriousness of infant welfare to the forefront, and was an important precursor to Children's Year.<sup>19</sup>

While Baby-Week provided the Children's Bureau with a successful way to reach communities, Children's Year would not have existed had it not been for the United States' entrance into World War I. The need for this campaign was not solely based on lowering the infant mortality rate. The Children's Bureau saw the potential and real threats the war could have on the children of

the country. They first realized that public health nurses were being drafted into the war to aid the soldiers overseas. Lathrop and the Bureau worried that with all of the nurses in the war effort, the health of infants and children would not be monitored. They felt that it was their duty to help the children who would come in second compared to the soldiers. The Bureau also saw that milk, a vital part of an infant's diet, was coming in short supply and, in turn, was very expensive. They understood that income played an important role in the child's survival rate and the rising prices of milk would not make it easy for low-income families to purchase it. Lastly, with most men being drafted overseas, many positions in factories were opening up. The demand for workers, along with increased wages, could potentially tempt mothers, or even children, to go to work. With mothers at work and fathers overseas, caring for infants and children would become a lower priority in favor of earning more money.<sup>20</sup> The Bureau needed a way to monitor the health of infants and toddlers, preach the need for proper nutrition, and keep mothers and children out of factories all while supporting the war effort. This is where Children's Year came in.

In addition to the potential threats of war on children, the war also gave the Children's Bureau a way to promote and push people into attending Children's

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Baby-Week Campaigns*, 25-28.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Baby-Week Campaigns*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Baby-Week Campaigns*, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action*, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mortality Statistics 1914*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1916: 12, accessed on November 10, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *The Story of the Children's Bureau: 100 Years of Serving our Nation's Children and Families*, 2012: 28, accessed on October 15, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 72.



"The Children's Year: April 6, 1919" (Poster, New York City, 1918) from Temple University, *Allied Posters of World War I*, accessed October 7, 2015, <http://digital.library.temple.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p16002coll9/id/3059>.

Year campaigns and investing in child welfare work: patriotism. The Bureau relied on the patriotism that the country was exhibiting for the war to promote their own campaign. They stated that victory in terms of war would be achieved by the men overseas but "Ultimate victory can come only to the Nation that defends the future of the race."<sup>21</sup> They were preaching to the country that winning the war would be a great achievement but the country should also work towards the best achievement, which is taking care of infants and children. Moreover, the Bureau distributed posters to communities that used Uncle Sam to ask if the children were healthy and taken care of.<sup>22</sup> An example

of this poster can be found to the left. The Bureau recognized how important the war effort was and used war propaganda to their own advantage.

Although Baby-Week campaigns and World War I were both important to the creation and development of Children's Year, the most influential source was the influence from Europe. Nothing motivates like competition. Even though both France and England had been in the war since the beginning, the citizens did not let the welfare of children fall to the wayside. Both countries saw the adverse effects war had on children and they decided to fix it.<sup>23</sup> By the second year of World War I, England's death rate was the lowest in her history and both England and France were working on reforming labor conditions and education for children.<sup>24</sup> The Children's Bureau was proud of their allies' accomplishments, but they were also ashamed. Other countries had drastically lowered their infant death rate to under 100 deaths per 1,000 births during a war and yet the United States only lowered their rate to 160 deaths per 1,000 births during peacetime.<sup>25</sup> This was an added incentive to create the campaign.

After taking in all of these factors, the Children's Bureau inaugurated the first Children's Year on April

<sup>20</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 72.

<sup>21</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 73.

<sup>22</sup> *The Children's Year: April 6, 1919* (Poster, New York City, 1918) from Temple University, *Allied Posters of World War I*, accessed October 7, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary of Work Done and Suggestions for Follow-up Work*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1920: 5, accessed on October 8, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Anne E. Rude, "The Children's Year Campaign," *American Journal of Public Health (N.Y.)* 5 (May 1919): 346-347, accessed October 25, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mortality Statistics 1917*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1919: 9, accessed on November 10, 2015.

6th, 1918.<sup>26</sup> Their main goal and slogan was to “Save 100,000 Babies,” or save the lives of a third of the estimated preventable infant deaths that occurred every year.<sup>27</sup> The campaign focused on lowering the infant mortality rate and protecting the welfare of preschool-aged children, but the underlying agenda for the campaign was to educate the population on the importance of protecting infants and children.<sup>28</sup> The Bureau wanted to “arouse the Nation to the importance of conserving childhood in times of national peril.”<sup>29</sup> President Woodrow Wilson was pleased to hear that there was something in place to aid in the mortality rate because he was well aware that England’s rate was more than 30% lower.<sup>30</sup> He set aside a \$150,000 fund<sup>31</sup> for the work that the Children’s Bureau planned to do and publically stated that this effort came right after the war effort in importance.<sup>32</sup> The Bureau knew, however, that they could not do this alone, so they enlisted the help of the Women’s Committee within the Council of National Defense.<sup>33</sup>

The work that was to be done had four aims which were then broken down into three distinct drives that would take place within the year. The four focuses were the creation of legislation that would publically protect expectant mothers and infants who were in need of assistance, the enforcement of child-labor laws and free schooling for all children, the education of mothers in caring for their older children, and the need for recreation within families and communities. The response from the states was overwhelming. From the first mention of Children’s Year in January of 1918, all but ten states had appointed a chairman of child welfare.<sup>34</sup> By the time Children’s Year concluded, more than eleven million volunteers participated.<sup>35</sup> Included in these volunteers was F. Luis Mora, an American painter who created a poster stating “The Health of the Child is the Power of the Nation” which was distributed throughout the country (see opposite)<sup>36</sup>. This poster became the image associated with Children’s Year.

The Year was split up into three drives: a weighing



F. Luis Mora, “The health of the child is the power of the nation,” (Poster, 1918) from Children’s Bureau Centennial, Children’s Bureau Timeline, accessed on October 7, 2015, <https://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/childrens-bureau-timeline>.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children’s Bureau, *Children’s Year: A Brief Summary*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood,” 71.

<sup>28</sup> Rude, “The Children’s Year Campaign,” 346.

<sup>29</sup> Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Jessica B. Peixotto, “The Children’s Year and the Women’s Committee,” *The Annals of Political and Social Service* 79 (Sept. 1918): 259, accessed October 6, 2015 from jstor.

<sup>31</sup> Peixotto, “The Children’s Year,” 348.

<sup>32</sup> *The First Children’s Year*, New York Times, April 6, 1919, accessed on October 7, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children’s Bureau, *Children’s Year: A Brief Summary*, 5.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children’s Bureau, *Children’s Year: A Brief Summary*, 5-6.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *The Story of the Children’s Bureau*, 28.

<sup>36</sup> F. Luis Mora, *The Health of the Child is the Power of the Nation*, (Poster, 1918) from Children’s Bureau Centennial, Children’s Bureau Timeline, accessed on October 7, 2015.



and measuring drive, a back-to-school drive, and a recreation drive.<sup>37</sup> The weighing and measuring drive, where height and weight standards originated, lasted from April 6th to June 6th.<sup>38</sup> Over seven million cards explaining proper height and weight were distributed all over the country.<sup>39</sup> This drive consisted of professionals in the communities weighing and measuring children to try and catch poor nutrition and care before it took the child's life. The professionals created height and weight standards that would make it easier to tell when a child was malnourished or in need of extra care. The back-to-school drive asked school districts to help decrease child labor by offering scholarships and other educational options to child workers. This started on February 11, 1919. Lastly, the recreation drive was to get children out and playing rather than working or sitting at home by holding supervised play times.

Even though this seemed like a huge undertaking, the Children's Bureau took a similar hands-off approach to the Children's Year campaign as they did with the Baby-Weeks: the Bureau came up with the ideas and then told the state affiliates what was needed to be done. Technically speaking, the states and volunteers did all of the work. This time around, the Bureau did not send any of their staff members out to the towns and there was not a main campaign that illustrated what to do. They did not even publish a guide to Children's Year like they did for Baby-Weeks. Most people did not even realize that the Children's Bureau was behind this campaign at all. In general, the Bureau received full cooperation from schools and factories, but the audience of the campaigns did not see the Bureau instigating the work; they only saw the town leaders.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, many mothers and children resisted the recreation drive and supervised play because they felt that their state governments should not get involved in what their children do.<sup>41</sup> They did not seem to have a problem with the Government handing out information on how to care

for their infants three years ago, but they still resisted Children's Year. By only creating the drives and the information pamphlets, the Children's Bureau did not get recognized for the work it did. The people saw the state governments working toward child welfare rather than seeing the Bureau's efforts to help. Nevertheless, at the close of the children's year in 1919, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and all but two states participated.<sup>42</sup>

The results of the Children's Year seemed relatively constructive. The information that the states sent back to the Bureau was promising and showed growth in the towns. One town sent the Bureau a list of seventy children who were working in factories and later, after the Bureau's guidance, reported that all but one child was convinced to go back to school. A western state reported that forty-thousand children were weighed and measured and forty-seven percent of those children had correctable physical defects.<sup>43</sup> By 1920, thirty-five states had established a child hygiene division within their Department of Health.<sup>44</sup> Anne E. Rude, the head of the Children's Bureau's Hygiene Department, stated that the major result of Children's Year was the establishment of constant prenatal and infant care through preschool age, and then the standardized physical examinations throughout

<sup>37</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 73.

<sup>38</sup> Peixotto, "The Children's Year," 261.

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 147.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 6.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 7-8.

<sup>44</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 73.

<sup>45</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 73

childhood.<sup>45</sup> The Children's Year reported that there was progress in all but one state by the end of the campaign.<sup>46</sup> The Bureau concluded from these immediate results that the Children's Year was a complete success. However, later statistics showed that the campaign's initial success was short-lived. A New York Times article published in 1921 with information from the Bureau stated that in 1919, one mother died for every one-hundred and thirty-five babies born.<sup>47</sup> National research found that the infant death rate did drop to an all-time low during 1918, dropping from 160.0 deaths per 1,000 births to 131.8 deaths per 1,000 births.<sup>48</sup> But, that rate rose in 1919, after Children's Year ended, to 147.4.<sup>49</sup> At the time of the New York Times article, the infant death rate was at 155.0.<sup>50</sup> While the Children's Year did lower the infant mortality rate during 1918, the rate rose quickly in the preceding years. The efforts of the Bureau members during this campaign were fleeting.

The Children's Bureau was not finished, though. Just because the Children's Year had ended did not mean that the welfare work would stop. There was a lot of work that still needed to be done and the special fund that President Wilson set aside would last until July of 1919.<sup>51</sup> The Year may have strengthened the understanding that child welfare was a national, even worldwide, issue, but the best work was yet to come.<sup>52</sup> Rude identified that the long-lasting benefit of Children's Year was the "establishment of permanent follow-up work."<sup>53</sup> Guidelines for future Back-to-School drives were included in the Children's Bureau's Children's Year summary pamphlet as well as examples of European welfare work and how they can be used in the United States.<sup>54</sup> A plan for reducing the loss of infants and mothers was also explained.<sup>55</sup>

In regards to the special fund that was still accessible, the Bureau decided to use it to fund a Child Welfare Standard Conference.<sup>56</sup> Foreign experts from European countries were invited to come help the United States. When the conferences concluded a few weeks later,

the Bureau had made a considerable amount of progress. They developed new minimum standards for health, education, and labor.<sup>57</sup> The health laws were formed from the height and weight requirements used during Children's Year. The education and labor laws were created from the information gathered during the back-to-school drive of Children's Year. Laws that protected children who had special needs were established as well as laws that protected children that were born out of wedlock. Lastly, they allowed children to work as long as they had a physical examination by their school nurse that found that they were physically fit and developing normally.<sup>58</sup> Before this law, there was nothing stopping a child from leaving school to work. These new laws and standards became the basis

<sup>45</sup> Lindenmeyer, "A Right to Childhood," 73

<sup>46</sup> Peixotto, "The Children's Year," 216.

<sup>47</sup> "Urges Child Welfare: Department of Labor Tells How the Death Rate Can be Reduced," New York Times, June 26, 1921, accessed on October 20, 2015.

<sup>48</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mortality Statistics 1918*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1920: 9, accessed on November 10, 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mortality Statistics 1919*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1921: 9, accessed on November 10, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mortality Statistics 1921*, Washington Government Printing Office, 1924: 9, accessed on November 10, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> "The First Children's Year."

<sup>52</sup> Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action*, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Rude, "The Children's Year Campaign," 350.

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 11, 14-15.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 14..

<sup>56</sup> "The First Children's Year."

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *The Story*, 28.

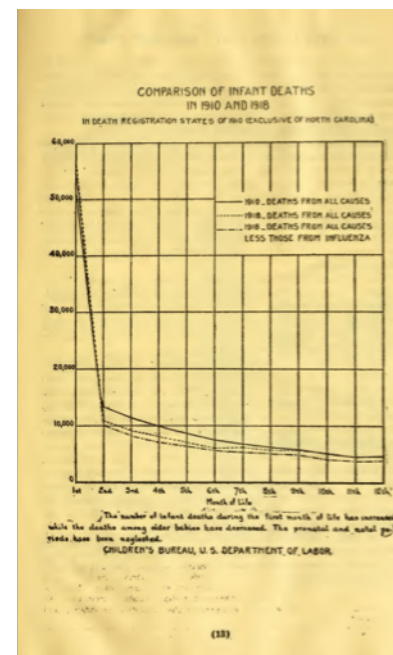
<sup>58</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Children's Year: A Brief Summary*, 12, 16.

for other work that the Children's Bureau would complete over the next twenty years. It also showed the country that child welfare is a global issue, which can be fixed with the help of the country's allies.

These were not the only standards that came out of Children's Year. The Bureau published in the New York Times ways to prevent the "waste of life" that happens when a child dies from a preventable reason. These include prompt birth registration, health centers, trained midwives or nurses in attendance during births, the education of the mother in maternity and child bearing, and the education of the public in the importance of maternal and infant health.<sup>59</sup> By publishing these findings in a prominent newspaper, the Bureau was able to spread this information around without much effort. The country would see what else needed to be done to stop the "waste of life" and start implementing these new ideas. The Children's Bureau used these ideas as a guideline for their later work.

The Bureau also published new pamphlets as a direct result of Children's Year. The first, *Infant Mortality*, outlines the causes as to why the death rate was still so high and what could be done to ensure the proper care for the child. The other, *Your Child from One to Six*, was a guidebook to parents on what the preschool child is going through and how to help the child in his development.<sup>60</sup> This was the first pamphlet the Children's Bureau published that did not deal with the infant death rate. Both publications were read all over the country and were widely popular. The second pamphlet was reprinted numerous times after its first publication in 1918.<sup>61</sup>

Once the leaders of the Children's Bureau realized that Children's Year did not accomplish the goal of lowering the infant death rate, they realized that they needed a way to reach out to the people and show them just how serious an issue this was. Their publication, *Save the Youngest* did just that. This pamphlet was short, to the point, and provided easy to read diagrams that communicated to readers the issues surrounding



U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Save the Youngest: Seven Charts on Infant Mortality* with explanatory comments, Washington Government Printing Office, 1919, accessed on October 4, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/saveyoungestseve1921unit>.

America's infant mortality rate.<sup>62</sup> One diagram was a thermometer that showed the United States' infant mortality rate compared to other country's rates. Another diagram compared infant deaths in 1910 and 1918, showing the minimal improvement that was made. (See diagrams above). It reported that the United States ranked seventeenth out of seventeen countries in respect to maternal mortality and seventh out of twenty countries in respect to infant mortality. War, it explained, was a mechanism that highlighted the worldwide issue of infant death, and the only

<sup>59</sup> "Urges Child Welfare."

<sup>60</sup> Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action*, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Bradbury, *Five Decades of Action*, 12.

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau, *Save the Youngest*, 2, 4, 6.

reason is because “we allow them to.”<sup>63</sup> Care towards infants has to begin during the prenatal period rather than the infant period or else the baby’s chance at living is drastically reduced. Finally, it published research findings on how a father’s income directly affected the baby’s chance at life. They found that as the father’s income doubled, the baby’s mortality rate was halved. The Bureau named poverty as a child’s greatest foe, and the working-class mother as socially helpless.<sup>64</sup> They explained that working mothers are ignorant to the issues an infant and child will have if the mother maintains poor health. Because of this ignorance, she cannot fix her behaviors unless the rest of the community takes on the responsibility of aiding and educating the mother. The community cannot do that until they understand themselves the impact poverty has on a child. This publication pointed out how far behind the United States was in the child welfare cause and brought to the forefront the ugly truth. This publication aided the Children’s Bureau in creating and passing a national maternity and infancy act.<sup>65</sup>

The Children’s Year campaign was a useful stepping stone in the fight to lower the infant mortality rate. It got the state governments involved in the cause and emphasized how it was an international issue. Without Children’s Year, the infant mortality rate would not have reached a new low, but the influence the year-long campaign had did not compare to the influence the events inspiring Children’s Year had or the events and pamphlets inspired by it. With a questionable execution and no lasting results, Children’s Year was more of an experiment to see how the Children’s Bureau could reach every state. What happened before and after this experiment, such as Baby Weeks, World War I, and later publications, is the real reason why infant and child welfare became a huge, important concern for the people of the United States.

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children’s Bureau, *Save the Youngest*, 2, 4, 6.

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Children’s Bureau, *Save the Youngest*, 14

<sup>65</sup> Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood,” 77.

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# The Gulf of Tonkin Incident: The Mistake that Launched the Vietnam War

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*Luke Ramsey*

**Course:** Historical Methods (HIST 2600)

**Professor:** David Koistinen

**Student:** Luke Ramsey

**Essay:** The Gulf of Tonkin Incident: The Mistake that Launched the Vietnam War

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment was created for HIST 2600-Historical Methods, a required course for history majors which teaches essential research and writing skills. The centerpiece of the class is a research paper of at least twelve pages, which makes substantial use of primary sources (materials created during the period under

study). Students in this section of HIST 2600 were advised to write about any topic in twentieth-century U.S. history, while ensuring topics were narrowed down to something focused enough and on which meaningful primary-source research was able to be carried out.

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Just before midnight, on August 4th 1964, television broadcasts across the nation were interrupted by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The President stated that “it is my duty to the American people to report that renewed hostile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply.”<sup>1</sup> This reported event is now known as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and was the immediate cause of the United States’ military escalation in Southeast Asia, one that ultimately led to the war in Vietnam. In the midnight address to the nation, Johnson stated that:

The initial attack on the destroyer Maddox, on August 2nd, was repeated today by a number of hostile vessels attacking two U.S. destroyers with

torpedoes. The destroyers and supporting aircraft acted at once on the orders I gave after the initial act of aggression. We believe at least two of the attacking boats were sunk. There were no U.S. losses.<sup>2</sup>

The President continued on to declare, “We Americans know, although others appear to forget, the risks of

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, Lyndon, “Lyndon Johnson’s Midnight Speech on The Gulf of Tonkin Incident—August 4, 1964,” [Presidentialrhetoric.com](http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com), accessed 4 Nov. 2015, [http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/historicspeeches/johnson\\_lyndon/gulfoftonkin.html](http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/historicspeeches/johnson_lyndon/gulfoftonkin.html) Madame de Pompadour,” [art21.org](http://www.art21.org). <http://www.art21.org/texts/cindy-sherman/interview-cindy-sherman-it-began-with-madame-de-pompadour> (accessed November 20, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, Lyndon, “Lyndon Johnson’s Midnight Speech on The Gulf of Tonkin Incident”

spreading conflict. We still seek no wider war.”<sup>3</sup> Three days later, on August 7th 1964, Johnson was able to effortlessly pass through the House of Representatives and Senate the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which provided the president with extensive war powers—enabling him to begin combat operations in Southeast Asia. Despite President Johnson’s claim that, “he sought no wider war,” the U.S. soon found itself embroiled in a quagmire that would last eight years and cause the deaths of 47,000 U.S. Servicemen killed in action and 11,000 lost to non-combat related deaths.<sup>4</sup> Immediately after Johnson’s address to the nation, questions arose about the accuracy of the President’s account of the unprovoked attacks by North Vietnamese forces against the Navy destroyers. Conflicting reports and an apparent cover up of the facts of the night attack raised serious doubts as to whether any real attacks had ever even taken place. Some in the Senate and in the North Vietnamese leadership began to suspect that President Johnson had fabricated the entire incident as a pretext to politically justify an escalation of the war.<sup>5</sup> While not entirely true, as there was no conscious conspiracy to fake an attack on the American Navy, there were ongoing covert efforts to provoke the North Vietnamese Navy into an attack that would give the U.S. government the legal justification it needed to escalate the use of force without a formal declaration of war from Congress. *USS Maddox* was sent to the Gulf of Tonkin to goad the communists into a confrontation. When initial reports suggested that they had taken the bait, Johnson wasted little time in making his case to the American public for the authority to strike back. Unfortunately for the American public and for the communists soon to be invaded, those initial reports turned out to be false. Many of the details of what really happened on August 2nd and 4th 1964 would take decades to come to light publically. Johnson would get his war in Vietnam, and soon it would no longer matter the reasons why we entered into that costly conflict; there could be no turning back.



Photo #97904 USS Maddox at sea, 28 January 1955

In order to understand the events of the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, it’s necessary to first understand the events leading up to the August 2nd incident—how they had shaped U.S. attitudes towards the spread of Communism and the reasoning behind the U.S. government’s desire to force an escalation in Vietnam. Following the French defeat in the first Indochina War, which lasted from 1946 to 1954, the United States sought to indirectly halt expanding Communist influence in Southeast Asia. With efforts beginning in the late 1950s.<sup>6</sup> This was part of a larger containment policy designed to halt the spread of communism throughout the world, essentially strangling it by

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, Lyndon, “Lyndon Johnson’s Midnight Speech on The Gulf of Tonkin Incident”

<sup>4</sup> World History Group, “Vietnam War,” History Net Where History Comes Alive World US History Online, accessed 4 Nov. 2015, <http://www.historynet.com/vietnam-war>

<sup>5</sup> United States, Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, and Robert S. McNamara, “The Gulf of Tonkin, the 1964 Incidents: Hearing, Ninetieth Congress, Second Session, With the Honorable Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, On February 20, 1968,” Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1968, Pg.6

<sup>6</sup> World History Group, “Vietnam War,” History Net

denying it the ability to grow. This was officially called the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine “effectively reoriented U.S. foreign policy, away from its usual stance of withdrawal from regional conflicts not directly involving the United States, to one of possible intervention in far away conflicts.”<sup>7</sup> The idea was to stop Communism from spreading peacefully and instead make it pay dearly for every inch gained. Fighting in Vietnam broke out in 1959 between the Communist-led rebel Viet Cong supported by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North, and the U.S. backed government forces of the Republic of Vietnam in the South. Frustrated with poor leadership and a series of embarrassing defeats that allowed the Viet Cong rebels to increase both military power and political influence, in 1963 the U.S. government supported an ill-conceived military coup against the ineffective president of the Republic of Vietnam, President Ngô Đình Diêm.<sup>8</sup>

The Kennedy Administration had hoped following Diêm’s overthrow, a strong Republic of Vietnam general would rise to take control and be able to do a more effective job of running South Vietnam and the war against the communists than previous administrations had.<sup>9</sup> United States Ambassador to Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge had said shortly before the coup, “It seems at least an even bet that the next government would not bungle and stumble as much as the present one has.”<sup>10</sup> Regrettably for U.S. interests in the region, the coup had not worked out as planned. Infighting between Republic of Vietnam officers and their mismanagement of the armed forces after the coup allowed the Viet Cong rebels to gain even more control of the Southern countryside. South Vietnam had become more divided than ever. Fearing a total communist takeover of Vietnam, the U.S. leadership concluded that they had no choice but to take a more active role in the Republic of Vietnam’s fight against the North.

In January 1963, Army Chief of Staff Earle Wheeler

was sent with a team of officers to South Vietnam in order to report back to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the South’s progress in the war. Wheeler’s suggestion to the Joint Chiefs was “that we should do something to make the North Vietnamese bleed.”<sup>11</sup> Soon after Wheeler’s mission, the U.S. began to increase pressure against the North using covert hit-and-run operations under the codename, “Operations Plan 34A.”<sup>12</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara had instructed Ambassador Lodge that President Johnson wanted plans for:

Covert operations by South Vietnamese forces, utilizing support of U.S. forces as is necessary, against North Vietnam. Plans for such operations should include varying levels of pressure all designed to make clear to the North Vietnamese that the U.S. will not accept a Communist victory in South Vietnam and that we will escalate the conflict to whatever level is required to insure their defeat.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State, “The Truman Doctrine,” Office of the Historian, Accessed 4 Nov. 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force, “US – Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, May – November 1963,” Declassified per Executive Order 13526, Section 3.3, Accessed 3 Nov. 2015, <https://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers/>, Pg. 5

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force, “US – Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, The Overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem, May – November 1963,” Pg.5

<sup>10</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, Pg.1

<sup>11</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.4

<sup>12</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force, “US – Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, Military Pressures Against North Vietnam, July – October 1964,” Declassified per Executive Order 13526, Section 3.3, Accessed 3 Nov. 2015, <https://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers/>, Pg. 26

<sup>13</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.5



As the U.S. had not yet attained the domestic legal justification needed to openly enter the conflict, it could not appear to have any involvement in the upcoming raids and needed to make it appear as though the OP 34A raids were entirely of South Vietnamese origin.<sup>14</sup> Despite this desire to publicly appear removed from the raids, the Republic of Vietnam had no real input or involvement in the raids other than simply providing the sailors to be trained and commanded by U.S. sailors. U.S. Navy SEALs trained the Vietnamese sailors to strike at Democratic Republic of Vietnam positions along the coast from small Norwegian-built attack boats—utilizing rockets, mortars, and small arms. The raids were to be entirely planned, funded, and controlled by the U.S. Navy.<sup>15</sup> Though publicly the U.S. vehemently denied any involvement whatsoever in the antagonizing raids, in reality the North Vietnamese forces had spies in nearly all of the covert training facilities and there was little doubt in Hanoi as to who was orchestrating the attacks.

Beginning on July 31st 1964, the U.S. Navy Destroyer *Maddox* was sent on a series of patrols through the Gulf of Tonkin under the operational codename “DESOTO.”<sup>16</sup> The official purpose was to “collect information about seaborne infiltration from North Vietnam to South Vietnam, but unofficially this was a simple cover story. Admiral Ulysses S. G. Sharp, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, described its true purpose as “determining Democratic Republic of Vietnam coastal patrol activity and to update our overall intelligence picture in case we had to operate against North Vietnam.”<sup>17</sup> After the previous years’ failed coup, the U.S. government viewed an open conflict with North Vietnam as all but inevitable. The DESOTO patrols were intended to provide the reconnaissance intelligence needed for the opening salvos of the war.

At the same time of the DESOTO patrols, more frequent and intense OP 34A raids were carried

out against North Vietnamese positions along the coast. Commanders in charge of Operation DESOTO realized that North Vietnamese radar sites would likely be more active during the OP 34A raids, so they purposely sent the *Maddox* near the vicinity of the raids so it could better gather intelligence on the radar installations.<sup>18</sup> CIA Deputy Director Ray S. Cline stated that there was “no doubt in my mind that the people planning these operations consciously decided to take advantage by sending in a DESOTO patrol so soon after a coastal raid that they could be confident of finding an unusually high level of electronic activity.”<sup>19</sup> Aware that the presence of the *Maddox* during the OP 34A raids may have been seen as provocative, *Maddox* Captain John J. Herrick ordered his second in command: “Do not permit the guns to be trained or elevated at all while under visual observation of any air or surface contact unless specifically authorized by the

<sup>14</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force, “US – Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, Military Pressures Against North Vietnam, July – October 1964,” Pg. 26

<sup>15</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force “US –

Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, Military Pressures Against North Vietnam, Action and Debate Feb – June 1964,” Declassified per Executive Order 13526, Section 3.3, Accessed 3 Nov. 2015, <https://www.archives.gov/research/pentagon-papers/>, Pg. 36

<sup>16</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force, “US – Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, Military Pressures Against North Vietnam, July – October 1964,” Pg.25

<sup>17</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.52

<sup>18</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, Top Secret Memo from the Vietnam Task Force, “US – Vietnam Relations 1945-1967, Evolution of the War, Military Pressures Against North Vietnam, July – October 1964,” Pg.26

<sup>19</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.60

commanding officer.”<sup>20</sup> Despite the captain’s attempt at appearing non-provocative, the *Maddox*’s proximity to the OP 34A raids and its arrival shortly thereafter the strikes was more than enough evidence the North Vietnamese would have needed to condemn the *Maddox* as being part of the same illicit operation.

On August 2nd 1964, the *Maddox* intercepted encrypted North Vietnamese communications ordering three Democratic Republic of Vietnam torpedo boats in the Tonkin Gulf area to attack. The general attack order was a mistake, it was in response to OP 34A raids happening that day and the torpedo boats were much too far away to effectively attack the destroyer had they actually been ordered to do so. Vietnamese officers interviewed in 1989 stated that:

They seemed to believe that the commander would have issued an order to attack the destroyer only when the *Maddox* was in a location making an attack appropriate, but the *Maddox* was not in such a location at 1350G on August 2nd. These officers stated that a recall order was sent when it was realized that the torpedo boats were going out to attack the *Maddox*, but that this recall order, which was supposed to be relayed to them by one of the patrol boats near Hon Me, never reached them.<sup>21</sup>

The torpedo boats never made it within the effective range necessary to have any real acceptable chance of hitting the destroyer. They fired their torpedoes far outside of the weapons’ operational range and were forced to retreat after taking several casualties caused by defensive fire laid down by the destroyer. The *Maddox* only sustained a minor hit from a single round fired from a 14.5mm machine gun. President Johnson chose not to respond to the attack because he was aware the U.S. had in fact intercepted a recall order sent out to the North Vietnamese torpedo squadron prior to the attack— an inconvenient detail not made public for years after the war commenced. Johnson stated in his memoirs that “this decision had been based on doubt that the attack on the *Maddox*

had actually been ordered by the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.”<sup>22</sup>

Secretary of Defense McNamara briefed a group of senior senators four days after the skirmish telling them:

Our Navy played absolutely no part in, was not associated with, was not aware of, any South Vietnamese actions, if there were any. I want to make that very clear to you. The *Maddox* was in operation in international waters, was carrying out a routine patrol of the type we carry out all over the world at all times. It was not informed of, was not aware of, had no evidence of, and so far as I know today had no knowledge of, any possible South Vietnamese actions in the area.<sup>23</sup>

McNamara’s account was not true, the Defense Secretary and the President had full knowledge of the OP 34A raids. They were fully aware of the United States Navy’s control over the operation and of how the DESOTO patrol could be perceived by the North Vietnamese to be connected to them. Prior to McNamara’s meeting with the senators, he spoke to Johnson over the phone on August 3rd, the call regarding whether or not they should disclose the nature of the American led covert operations and their role in the August 2nd incident. The secretary said to President Johnson,

I think I should also, or we should also at that time, Mr. President, explain this Op Plan 34A, these covert operations. There’s no question but what that had bearing on. And on Friday night, as you probably know, we had four PT boats from Vietnam manned

<sup>20</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.62

<sup>21</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.73.

<sup>22</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.90

<sup>23</sup> Moise, Edwin E. “Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War,” Pg.86

by Vietnamese or other nationals, attack two islands. And we expended, oh, a thousand rounds of ammunition of one kind or another against them. We probably shot up a radar station and a few other miscellaneous buildings. And following twenty-four hours after that, with this destroyer in that same area, undoubtedly led them to connect the two events.<sup>24</sup>

Had August 2nd been the only incident concerning the *Maddox*, perhaps McNamara and Johnson would have been more honest with the U.S. senators during that meeting. But following the events on August 4th, it appeared that this particular truth could no longer fit with the Johnson Administration's official narrative of the Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

On August 4th, the *Maddox* along with another destroyer, *USS Turner Joy*, were sent back into the gulf to "show the flag" and save face following the unsuccessful torpedo attack. More OP 34A raids were scheduled during this patrol and U.S. Naval Intelligence knew Democratic Republic of Vietnam coastal defenses were on high alert. The Johnson Administration rightly believed that by sending the DESOTO patrol back into the Gulf of Tonkin during these raids, they could again provoke an attack from the North Vietnamese Navy, one that they hoped would prove more definitive than the first. Secretary McNamara confirmed this in a phone call with President Johnson that same day on August 4th 1964 while discussing an admiral's desire to change the planned course of the patrol:

It, it, uh, changes a program that that uh shouldn't be changed frequently. These orders are very precise; the tracks are laid down very clearly; they go through the three command channels to get out there; this ship is allegedly uh to be attacked tonight, we don't like to see a change in operation plan of this kind at this time. And we don't think it achieves any any uh international purpose, so no, certainly no military purpose is served by it.<sup>25</sup>

Acknowledging that they were aware the *Maddox* was in danger and refusing to take any serious precautions, McNamara and Johnson go on to discuss plans for retaliatory air strikes following the attack:

I've talked to Mac Bundy [national security adviser] a moment ago and told him that I thought that was the most important subject we should consider today, and, and be prepared to recommend to you a response, a retaliation move against North Vietnam in the event this attack takes place within the next six to nine hours.<sup>26</sup>

Once again McNamara confirmed in this recording his belief that an attack was imminent.

That night on August 4th 1964, in bad weather and zero visibility, the *Maddox* picked up multiple contacts on their radar and radioed they were under attack. For the rest of the night, the two destroyer squadron engaged targets on their radars screens and called in air support from a nearby aircraft carrier group. It was determined shortly after the battle that no Democratic Republic of Vietnam forces were in the area—the radar contacts were false readings caused by a combination of poor weather, equipment issues, and inexperienced sonar men. Shortly after the DESOTO patrol turned out to sea evading what they believed was an impending mass torpedo boat attack, *Maddox* Captain Herrick reported to his superiors:

Review of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects on radar and overeager sonar men may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual

<sup>24</sup> National Security Archive, "LBJ Tapes on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident," LBJ Tapes on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, Accessed 4 Nov. 2015, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB132/tapes.htm>

<sup>25</sup> National Security Archive, "LBJ Tapes on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident".

<sup>26</sup> National Security Archive, "LBJ Tapes on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident"

sightings by the *Maddox*. Suggest complete evaluation before any further action taken.<sup>27</sup>

Captain Herrick's suggestion that military intelligence evaluate the incident before taking further action fell on deaf ears.

Around midnight August 4th 1964, President Johnson interrupted television broadcasts around the nation to announce that Navy ships were involved in an unprovoked attack in international waters by the naval forces of North Vietnam. On August 5th, the United States launched sixty-four retaliatory aircraft sorties, indiscriminately striking targets of opportunity all along the coast of northern Vietnam. Two American planes were shot down and the pilots lost.<sup>28</sup> On August 7th President Johnson was able to overwhelmingly pass through the House and Senate the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving Johnson unrestricted power to fully commit to American ground combat operations in Southeast Asia. The Gulf of Tonkin Incident, as the phantom attack and initial mistake became known, finally gave President Johnson the legal justification he needed to convince the American public to go along with an escalation of American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Though there was an extensive investigation by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, spearheaded by Senator James Fulbright four years after the incident,<sup>29</sup> many of the facts regarding the extent of provocative actions secretly undertaken by top leadership in the U.S. government and of the willingness of the Johnson Administration to use a Navy destroyer with hundreds of officers and men as bait to further a political agenda did not come out publicly until the leak of the Pentagon Papers in 1971 and the subsequent release of the LBJ tapes. It became increasingly clear that some in U.S. government had wanted the *USS Maddox* to come under attack and perhaps even sink, all in order to provide political means to convince a war-weary American public to sacrifice more lives to contain the

spread of Communism. Nowhere was this belief more strongly held anywhere than with the crew of the *USS Maddox* who sailed her during that fateful patrol:

Several sailors on the *Maddox* saw a fleet tug with the American task force just outside the Gulf of Tonkin, a tug that would not normally have been with this task force. This would have been a suitable vessel to go in and help haul the *Maddox* out, if the *Maddox* were badly shot up. A member of the crew of the tug is rumored to have said to someone on the *Maddox* that the *Maddox* had been expected either to be sunk or to suffer heavy casualties.<sup>30</sup>

Undersecretary of State George Ball shared similar beliefs, he said just after the war's end:

At that time there's no question that many of the people who were associated with the war were looking for any excuse to initiate bombing. The reason the destroyer was sent up was to show the flag, to indicate that we didn't recognize any other force in the gulf; and there was some intelligence objective. But on the other hand I think there was a feeling that if the destroyer got into some trouble, that would provide the provocation we needed.<sup>31</sup>

Whether or not there was an actual concerted effort to set the *Maddox* up to be heavily damaged or sunk, by sending the destroyer to follow so closely behind the infuriating OP 34A raids in the Gulf and then to have it

<sup>27</sup> Moise, Edwin E. "Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War," Pg.143

<sup>28</sup> Paterson, Lieutenant Commander Pat, "The Truth About Tonkin," USNI.org, February 1, 2008, Accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.usni.org/magazines/navalhistory/2008-02/truth-about-tonkin>

<sup>29</sup> United States, Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, and Robert S. McNamara, "The Gulf of Tonkin, the 1964 Incidents," Pg.3

<sup>30</sup> Moise, Edwin E. "Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War," Pg.99

<sup>31</sup> Moise, Edwin E. "Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War," Pg.99-100

follow a course that placed it well within the territorial waters claimed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, not “in the high seas” as Johnson had told the American public, it was plain to see that the patrol invited an attack that would tempt even the most cautious adversary. Fortunately the capabilities of the North Vietnamese to launch a successful torpedo strike against a Navy destroyer may have been severely overestimated. The fact that Johnson had not only expected but encouraged a second attack on the night of August 4th and his willingness to sacrifice American lives in order to satisfy his ambitions in Southeast Asia sets a dangerous precedent for the powers of the executive branch. It is important to understand the reasons why we allow ourselves to be drawn into

conflict, no matter how many years since passed, in order that we may avoid spur of the moment hysterics and instead take time to reason and question before committing to something we won't easily be able to get out of. Spanish philosopher George Santayana said it best, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Flamm, Matthew Caleb, “George Santayana (1863—1952),” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/santayan/>.

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# Food Manifesto

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*Marie M. Sheehan*

**Course: Communicating Food (COMM 2620)**

**Professor: S. P. Ferris**

**Student: Marie M. Sheehan**

**Essay: Food Manifesto**

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment had two elements: position and action. Students were asked to articulate their precise convictions about and positions on 2-3 food related issues, considering the possible social, economic, cultural, and psychological factors that influence food practices and the politics of consumption, production and distribution. After describing the issue, students

were required to discuss their own positions, supported by evidence from the course and beyond. Students were also asked to declare their personal resolutions to actions in response to the issues they selected to discuss, in specific detail and considering immediate impact on friends, family, coworkers, communities, and more.

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I feel I must begin this manifesto by letting you know how I came to my positions and actions. As I was beginning to gather my ideas and resources in order to outline this paper I realized how much, but yet, how little I actually knew about food related issues when I started this semester. This manifesto is a reflection of how I put it all together. I had several “ah ha” moments during the readings and lectures. I guess I somehow realized that there was an issue or that something wasn’t right, but could never really put it into words or action and admittedly never devoted the time. The structure and experiences of this course have caused me to become more self-aware. I found it difficult to articulate on only three related food issues, however I decided to discuss physiological, social and economic food practices. Policies of consumption,

production and distribution will also be addressed in each of the topics as they all are relative and contribute exponentially to the physiological, social and economic practices of food consumption.

We eat in order to support our physiological needs, a process termed energy homeostasis and as Anderson stated in our reading “brains are incredibly costly.” The human nervous system makes up only 3 percent of body weight but uses 25 percent of basal metabolic calories (Anderson, 2005, p. 16). There is a physiological need to eat, however, we have also developed a psychological need. In a million and a half years, the brain increased in size by almost 400 percent. Such a rate of evolution is rare enough for any organ; for the nervous system, it is unique (according to present knowledge) (Anderson, 2005, p. 15). As I see it, human

evolution can be viewed over time as a dance of knowledge. This “dance” is between our brain and our organ system and how these systems interact in order to control our energy balance and how we eat. Energy balance requires our brain to have the ability to detect what energy to store and to match our intake with our expenditures. I believe this is what Anderson (2012) is speaking of when he refers to satiety. I have learned during my biology and physiological labs and lectures that energy homeostasis is controlled mainly by neuronal circuits in the hypothalamus and brainstem, whereas reward and motivation aspects of eating behavior are controlled by neurons in the limbic region and cerebral cortex.

We also know from Anderson (2012) that the



tendency to crave certain foods is biologically grounded. Our gastrointestinal tract basically serves as a channel for food, but is also crucial for our digestion and absorption of nutrients, hence part of that homeostasis. As long as our chemoreceptors are working properly, and there isn't some sort of damage or compromise to our sensory system (such as aging), we all receive visual, olfactory and gustatory stimuli before food even enters our mouths. Unfortunately, the food production industries also realize this and capitalize on it with the ingredients they put in their foods and how they market their products through creative advertising. This is well documented by Michael Moss in his book *Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*. These food giants also turn to a research center that I also learned about in Moss's book: the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia. Founded in 1968, the center's mission is to advance knowledge of the mechanisms and functions of the chemical senses to benefit human health and well-being. Knowledge gained from Monell's research provides insight and solutions for issues related to public health, national health policy, and quality of life, including studies of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, pediatric health, occupational safety, environmental interactions, and homeland security (Wikipedia). Interestingly enough, Moss (2013) says, "The stickiest subject at Monell, however, is not sugar. It's money. Tax-payers fund about half of the center's \$17.5 million annual budget through federal grants, but much of the rest of its operation comes from the food industry, including the big manufacturers" (p. 7). I wanted to look into this further and found more in a special report published by 247WallSt.com. According to Chris Jochnick, director of the private sector department at Oxfam America, there are ten food companies that dictate food choices, supplier terms, and consumer variety throughout the world (Hess 2014). Julie Mennella, a bio-psychologist at Monell, is concerned about how much influence these food companies have on our tastes, especially



when it comes to children. “Its not that food companies are teaching children to like sweetness; rather, they are teaching children what foods should taste like. And increasingly, this curriculum has been all about sugar.” (Moss 2013, p.15). As a consumer and taxpayer this is extremely disturbing to me.

From the assigned readings this semester such as Food Deserts, Food Environments, Anderson, and Moss’s book, I wondered at what life stage these manufacturers started this sugar crave conditioning. I decided to take a look at infant formula while shopping one day. I was mortified and angry when seeing the first ingredient in many was corn syrup. Additionally, there was a laundry list of questionable items such as carrageenan, synthetic preservatives and synthetic nutrients and yet most of these items were labeled as WIC approved.

As we learned from Johns Hopkins’ Hunger and Food Security, WIC is one of the federal food and nutrition assistance programs (Johns Hopkins, n.d., pp. 2 & 4). I decided to do a little research and I was appalled by what I found. I should not have been so naive, however. There are lobbying groups for the food industry that influence regulations on infant formulas (Kent, 2014 p. 6). The WIC program supplies about half the infant formula used in the United States at no cost to families (Kent, 2014 p.8). WIC is an agency of the US government; however, because of the “deals” made between our government and the lobbyists, WIC is basically powerless in making the decision as to what formulas they will approve to be passed on to families. Their hands are essentially tied and Maureen K. Minchin, who has been published in the areas of nutritional biochemistry, nutrition and dietetics, and the history of science reveals:

“A 2004 legislative change removed WIC’s ability to determine which of the formulas it wanted from a tendering company; companies could determine what formula they offered to WIC, at what price. If they offered the expensive or novel brands, WIC had

no choice but to become the inadvertent marketer of such products, despite the lack of scientific proof of either safety or efficacy, or the preferences of the WIC authority. Attempts as late as 2010 to study the new ingredients were stymied by high-powered industry lobbyists.” (Kent 2014, p.8)

We learned about food access, food security and food environments in our readings. The baby formula, in my opinion, crosses over all socio-economic standards. The lower socioeconomic consumer is left with no choice as to the product they can purchase and provide, and the higher socioeconomic consumer is misled by the false security and misleading labels. I was even more shocked to find out that chemical additives have skirted USDA approval and even have the USDA Organic Seal (Kent, 2014 p.5). And why wouldn’t a consumer believe the USDA labeling on the product? In the past, I would not have questioned purchasing an item with the USDA seal. Now, I will definitely do additional research. My total disbelief lead me to discover the Cornucopia Institute and their mission statement: The Cornucopia Institute, through research and investigations on agricultural and food issues, provides needed information to family farmers, consumers and other stakeholders in the good food movement and to the media. As their web site states, they “support economic justice for the family-scale farming community – partnered with consumers – backing ecologically produced local, organic and authentic food” (cornucopia.org). The Cornucopia Institute has uncovered a laundry list of questions regarding the source, processing and other ingredients used not only in baby formula, but also in all foods that are certified organic products.

As a neuropsychology major I was fascinated by the findings of the Frito-Lay study “Betcha Can’t Eat Just One” (Moss, 2013, p. 328). This was a longitudinal study that did not follow a random sample of participants but rather subjects that all worked in the health field, specifically a sample comprised of 120,877

men and women working in some capacity in the health field. The validity of the study can stand up to various test measures due to the sample size and for the purposes of this study the “non-randomization” of participants. Published data also revealed just how irresistible the chips were to the participants to include the way they were packaged (Moss, 2013, p.328). What I found most revealing was that the chips’ ingredients were quite effective in getting people to overeat. As a neuropsychology major, I found the biological, physiological, and neurological influences that these companies have been able to capitalize on, regarding consumption of food, both fascinating and disgusting. These chips are loaded with fat, sugar and salt, and referring to the marketing campaigns and as Moss so appropriately puts it “the marketing campaigns give you physiological permission to eat as many as you like” (Moss, 2013, p. 329).

Our course lectures and assignments have caused me to take a closer look at things. In the book *Food Fight, the Inside Story of the Food Industry - America's Obesity Crisis and What We Can Do About It*, the author says, “Eating in American culture is like swimming in a tsunami. The best of intentions get pulled under by massive forces” (Brownell, 2004, p. 21). This quote to me summarizes so many key points from several of our readings and is so reflective on personal, social, industrial and governmental decisions. The course readings from Anderson, Love, *Food Deserts*, The World Health Organization’s fact sheet on obesity and overweight, and Timi Gustafson’s blog, all point me to one key factor, the most heavily marketed foods that tend to be the least healthy, are the ones that people will steer toward over others that may be more healthy options. These items are usually cheaper, convenient and most easily accessible. We discussed this in lecture when talking about the cost of a single banana at a local bodega in comparison to how much other items cost. The person who lives in that environment is forced to make the decision to choose the apple or picking

an item, possibly two from the dollar menu at the fast food place right next door to the bodega. Healthier foods are generally more expensive than unhealthy foods, particularly in food deserts and, while the overall price of fruits and vegetables in the US increased by nearly 75% between 1989 and 2005, the price of fatty foods dropped by more than 26% during the same period (The Food Empowerment Project, nd, para.6). Unfortunately, those items off the fast food menu provide that individual with the salt, sugar and fat they are craving for about the same price as the single piece of fruit. If that person resides in a food desert, has little time to prepare foods or lacks an adequate location to prepare a meal, convenience and fast foods become the go-to choice by default.

I have always been an individual who is extremely sodium-intolerant. If I have too much, and that’s not much for me, my feet, ankles, and hands swell as if wanting to become balloons. It’s extremely uncomfortable and I feel tired and sluggish. I do not cook with salt, nor have it on my table, and I am constantly looking at labels to see the sodium content. I guess I realized from the time that I started making food decisions on my own that manufacturers put sodium in products to extend the shelf life of certain perishable, packaged, and frozen foods and I got that. In the military in the 1980’s and early 90’s traveling to certain countries and going to open markets I would see fish laid out on beds of salt and hanging meats that were covered in a packing of salt. They did not have portable refrigeration and this was their way (an acceptable way) to preserve the freshness of these items. Fast forward 25 years later and I find out that the big food industries have been in bed (for lack of a better descriptive) with our government and have and are continuing to fund (through my tax dollars) agencies that promote exploiting how humans crave salt, sugar and fat. I understand for preservation and shelf life, but how they have been unscrupulously going about it in order to get us hooked on their products

disgusts me. I have learned in my neurological and physiological courses that the brain has some flexibility due to genetic coding but prior to this course, I never actually conceptualized how the brain can learn, plan, revise, and change when it comes to food (Anderson, 2005). Talk about an ah-ha moment! I know now that I was not as informed a consumer as I originally thought. I will now make it a point to look at labels and ingredients, manufacturing, and processing with more scrutiny.

There were a lot of ah-ha and quite positive moments this semester. One of them was that I needed to drink more water. I have always purchased water by case from the local supermarket and usually the brand on sale that week. I purchased bottled water for our consumption because I live in a town where I have a well, and, I can't stand the taste or smell of my water; another ah-ha as that possibly being a contributing factor as to why I didn't drink enough. My refrigerator water dispenser filter just did not do the trick. The water always had a terrible taste, smell and sediments floating in it, thus leading me to purchase bottled water. I would even fill my dogs' water bowls with the bottled water. In some ways, I am grateful for my well because I do not have all the added phosphates and chlorine that municipal water has, but I could never get past the taste and smell of my well water. This course gave me that ah-ha moment and made me realize just how much plastic waste my family was producing between the four of us humans and my two 70-pound dogs. A comment made in a class lecture one day made me think, prior to that - I have to admit - I was lazy and going for convenience (S. Ferris, lecture March, 2013). My husband and I looked into whole-house filtration systems. We were able to purchase and install a system on our own for under \$1,500, and when I realized how much we were spending on bottled water and considered its environmental impact, I realized it would pay off in no time. I factored in the frequency of filter replacements and cost, was able to locate

a company online that has incentives and rebates, and realized with a little time and effort what an environmental and economic long-term impact I could create. An added bonus is no more hauling cases of water home on my grocery runs!

I have also been supporting local and making it a point to get to Ramsey Farmers Market since learning from our course readings. I have to admit, it is so much easier to just go to your local supermarket and purchase whatever fruits and vegetables are on sale, but after so many of the readings this semester, I made it a point to look into local options. I discovered the Ramsey Farmers Market, which is open Sundays all year long, and in the winter months they use one of the local elementary schools. During winter certain items are limited, as to be expected, but what a find! I also discovered Pure Vida Fisheries, run by Captain Rick Lofstad out of New York. I am a seafood junkie; despite knowledge of the questionable fishing and fishery methods, I love seafood. Prior to relocating to Bergen County three years ago, I resided in Ocean County in a waterfront community. I would fish from March through November and crab and clam from the water right off my bulkhead. Needless to say, I was "fresh-catch" devastated when moving to this area. One of the perks of residing in a waterfront fishing community, even if you were having bad luck, there was the ability to purchase fresh catch from local vendors, often right at the docks. You knew these people and their methodology and ethics. Discovering Ramsey Farmers Market and Pure Vida Fisheries, there is a certain comfort level that comes out of purchasing seafood items from a small business. The way I see it, these individuals are placing their name and livelihood on having a good quality product. I never purchased farm-raised fish and now after reading "What Should We Eat?" I know what to look for in wild caught fish (Singer & Mason, 2006, p. 274).

I plan on continuing my support for Ramsey Farmers Market in part because of their mission statement

outlined below:

To extend the mission of the Ramsey Historical Association by stimulating interest in and appreciation for Ramsey's past including its rich history as a farming community. To educate the community on the importance of eating locally grown foods. To provide opportunity for local residents and businesses to conveniently obtain and sell high quality locally grown and artesian produced natural products in a welcoming and informative setting. To support the mission of the Ramsey Community Wellness Campaign. To encourage cooperation and participation with community organizations. (RamseyFarmersMarket.org)

The crux of their mission statement is this:

"We envision community in which people are buying and eating fresh, local food, where local farmers are supported and thriving, where schools, community institutions, and restaurants serve local food, where other farmers markets in our region share a mission of promoting and celebrating the values of eating locally. We believe that local foods help flourish the community and support the local economy. We believe in sustainable practices..."  
(RamseyFarmersMarket.Org)

What I thought to be extremely important was that they give preference and priority to vendors that sell products the vendors make or are sourced locally. They also heavily encourage the use of biodegradable and/or sustainable products and they recycle to minimize waste. An additional added bonus for me is Aunt Vicky's Bickys. Aunt Vicky's is an all-natural dog treat, biscuit, and bone bakery. For me this is the "Holy Grail" of finds. One of my dogs has a very delicate digestive system causing him to be on a limited-ingredient diet. Aunt Vicky's is local to Bergen County and can make treats to suit any pet's gastrointestinal needs. She has several pre-made, specific-ingredient treats and will

work with you to design a treat for your pet's specific needs if required.

This course has been a true awakening for me. I understand that this paper was a manifesto and not a research paper, but yet I found myself doing research all semester long and that research is definitely something I plan on continuing. In closing I want to say that I chose this course because I was required to take a University Core Curriculum Course. I read through all the course descriptions, and Communicating Food really sounded interesting to me. As a Psychology Major who is in the Clinical/ Neuropsychological Honors Track I was amazed at how this class related to the neurological, biological and physiological domains. My last personal resolution will be to contact the University Administration and advise them how important I feel it is that all psychology majors take this course, and if not for the General Psychology Majors at least for the Honors Track.

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# Book Review: The Girls Who Went Away

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*Sylvia Wasserman*

**Course:** Reproductive Rights (PBHL/WGS 3140)

**Professor:** Jean Levitan, Public Health

**Student:** Sylvia Wasserman

**Essay:** Book Review: The Girls Who Went Away

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## Assignment:

A number of the women whose stories are shared had similar experiences related to their pregnancies and the surrendering of their babies. Select one of the long cases (there are 18 from which to choose) and discuss the case and your reactions. For example, what choices

did the young woman have? What about her story affected you? Expand on your thoughts and reactions. Overall, how did this book affect your understanding of adoption?

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*The Girls Who Went Away* by Ann Fessler was different from any book I've read before. When I think of a book, I think of a single story of someone who goes through an unbelievable experience, whether fact or fiction. This book encompassed many true stories from all different women who were in similar situations; they were all unwed mothers in a time when abortion was illegal. These women ended up giving their babies up for adoption, some by choice and others not. This book is incredibly powerful. It made me feel depressed then happy then angry and so on. I couldn't help but picture myself in their situations and feel utterly helpless. Reading this book teaches you things about adoption that you wouldn't know otherwise, and prompts you to re-evaluate your own views on many women's rights issues.

In chapter two, Fessler introduced the topic of her book. She interviewed women

who had given their baby up for adoption between the end of World War II in 1945 and the legalization of abortion in 1973. During these years it was common for young people to have premarital sex, but they weren't receiving proper sex education. Many young women became pregnant because of their lack of knowledge and the difficulty of accessing contraceptives. Once pregnant, the women were looked down upon in society while the men went on living their lives as normal. Many times the only "option" given to these women by their parents, other adults, and society was adoption, whether they wanted to do it or not.

In chapter three, Fessler discussed society's views about premarital sex. In the 1920s, dating culture changed. Parents no longer had control over how their children dated and young people were more independent. The youth set their own standards for

dating and sex. It was okay to have premarital sex, but only if you were in a relationship and you could never talk about it. If people found out that a girl was sexually active, she was labeled as a “slut” and considered a bad girl. Her peers would shun her, but not her partner. Despite the possible social stigma, the number of pregnancies rose because of lack of sex education from schools and parents, and the difficulty for single women to access birth control.

In chapter four, Fessler examined the aftermath once a woman’s pregnancy was known. For many young women a quick marriage was an easy solution to avoid social stigma. However, sometimes marriage wasn’t an option because the pregnant girl, father of the baby, or their parents didn’t want it to happen. For those women that didn’t get married, they faced shame from society and their families. Peers and friends would no



longer associate with the girl. Parents would disown their daughter or try to hide her, fearing her situation would reflect badly on them. Meanwhile, most of the men who got the women pregnant went along normally with their lives. The shame these women experienced negatively affected them for the rest of their lives.

In chapter five, Fessler focused on the reactions of the families after learning a daughter was pregnant. After World War II many White families experienced economic advancement and moved into the middle-class where the pressures to conform to societal norms were overwhelming. Many White families disowned their daughters or forced them to give their child up for adoption in order to get rid of the “problem” and avoid shame. However, disownment and adoption wasn’t as common for African-American families. Since discrimination was still prominent at this time, many families didn’t have the money to send their daughters to maternity homes where availability was limited. Many African American families ended up informally adopting the child.

In chapter six, Fessler discussed the maternity homes unwed mothers were sent to.

With the rise of unwed pregnancies these homes were filled to capacity. Many girls were denied access or sent to a “wage home” to work until a spot was open. Most girls didn’t know much about these homes; they felt scared and abandoned when left there. At the homes the girls were given fake names, did chores, kept up with schoolwork, and sometimes participated in extracurricular activities. The homes constantly “persuaded” the women until they believed adoption was the best and only option. Most of the women had horrible experiences at these homes and carried those memories with them for the rest of their lives.

In chapter seven, Fessler featured women’s experiences of birth and giving away their babies. Many of these women weren’t prepared physically, emotionally, and

mentally for birth. Nothing was explained to them and they didn't understand what was happening. They also didn't expect the deep emotional connection they would have with the baby and the crippling yearning to be with them. Some women never met their babies because the maternity home didn't allow it or they chose not to. They felt it would be easier for them if they didn't make a connection, but that was nearly impossible. Others did get to meet their babies, but eventually the baby was taken away and adoption papers had to be signed. The women dreaded this moment. Unfortunately, no one explained the other options, it was just sign the papers and move on. Most women carried this emotional baggage with them for the rest of their lives.

In chapter eight, Fessler talks about the women's lives after their babies were taken away. For many of these women having their babies taken away greatly influenced the person they became and affected them for the rest of their lives. They felt grief over the event and weren't given guidance on how to properly heal. Many women became depressed, had low self-esteem, felt shame/guilt/self-hate, weren't trusting, couldn't form healthy/ intimate relationships, and even experienced physical sickness. Some women wanted to have more children as soon as possible, and others never wanted to have children again. For the women who sought therapy they weren't always helped. Many therapists weren't properly trained on how to handle adoption related issues. Support groups have been very helpful for the women because they could share their experiences and connect with others that went through the same thing.

In chapter nine, Fessler focused on the birth mother and adoptees' searches for each other and their reunions. Each state has different laws as to what information can be accessed about the adoption so the difficulty of reunion varies. Organizations, registries, and even private investigators have been used to help in the searches. Some people didn't want to be

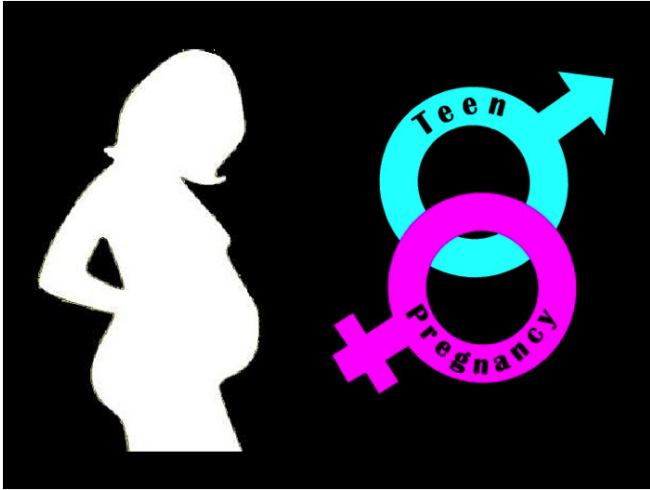
found, and others took some time before they were comfortable meeting. In the end, most did meet. Some of the reasons for wanting to meet were to get medical information, learn about their family history, and just getting to know each other. Overall, the reunions allowed the mothers to start properly healing from their experiences.

In chapter ten, Fessler examined the power of communication. Every one of these women's experiences were different, but the one similarity was no one understood what losing their children was like. These women have tried to hide their experiences for fear of being judged, but this prevents people from learning the truth. The mother's family, adoptees, and others, don't realize how horrible it was for unwed mothers from 1945 to 1973. If they knew, it could possibly mend their relationship with the mother and help in her healing. However, some positive things came out of these mother's experiences as well. Many of the mothers gave their children good sex education, and some of them chose professions where they could help others.

Many women's stories were featured in this book, but the one that had the biggest impact on me was Claudia's. On Claudia's seventeenth birthday she and a friend went out to celebrate. They ran into a man in her art class who invited them to a party. At the party, the man, who was thirty-one years old, talked to Claudia the whole night. After that night, they started having sex without his girlfriend knowing and Claudia got pregnant almost immediately. She told him of the pregnancy, but it was obvious he didn't want to be involved so she stopped pursuing him. She tried to hide her pregnancy as long as she could, but eventually the truth came out. She ran away, but her mother found her and within a few days she was sent to a maternity home. The home wasn't a nice place. The nuns were mean, the girls were told they were bad, and they didn't receive any counseling. Within a few days of having her baby, she signed the adoption papers and



was sent home to pretend like it never happened. Many years later both Claudia and her daughter, Raina, found each other and started their relationship. Raina also wanted to meet her father so Claudia reached out to him. He had to tell his wife the situation, but after a few days of anger she was able to forgive. The wife reached out to Claudia and from then on they were all family.



All of the stories in this book had some effect on me, but I couldn't get Claudia's story out of my head. All of the stories made me sad and angry, but Claudia's story also made me happy. When I read that a thirty-one year old man with a girlfriend knowingly pursued a seventeen-year-old girl I was infuriated. He took advantage of her and used her for sex; she was too naïve to realize it. Not to mention, he lied to and betrayed his girlfriend. Then he decided he didn't want to be involved and just like that he wasn't. I hated him. How could he go on normally with his life while Claudia had to deal with this all on her own? It wasn't fair.

Claudia didn't have many choices. When you're so young you certainly don't have the financial ability to care for a child. You may not even have the mental or physical capability either. If she had help from her

family or knew she could by law receive payments from the father she could have tried to keep the child. However, no one was willing to help or explain these options to her. She could have had an abortion, but they were illegal, expensive, and dangerous. It didn't seem that was plausible for her. The only option she was presented with, and pretty much forced into, was giving her baby up for adoption.

During her time at the maternity home, Claudia remembered a girl who had a learning disability and became pregnant by rape. That small story made me so upset. It's amazing to me how people could be so cruel. It was even more upsetting that many of the girls in this story, although they didn't realize it at the time, became pregnant because of rape. In that time it didn't matter what you wanted, men's wants were more important. That is completely unfair and teaches girls they don't matter and they should be submissive. In history, if women were treated as equals we could have achieved so much more. The worst part is many of these men went on with their lives while the women felt shame and suffered.

The end of Claudia's story was what made me remember it so much. After this horrible experience and all these years, Claudia is finally reunited with her daughter, Raina. They were finally able to look at, smell, and touch each other after being denied it all these years. It was especially touching when Claudia reached out to Raina's father. After all those years and how horrible he was to her, she was able to confront him. I felt as if she was finally able to forgive him, and it made me able to forgive him. What he did was wrong, but everyone makes mistakes and you learn from them. I was so happy for Claudia, Raina, the father, and the rest of their families that they were now connected because of this crazy situation. I know going through an experience like that is traumatic and long-lasting, but to see it end well made me happy.

Before reading this book I never really thought about adoption because no one close to me was adopted.

This book definitely taught me a lot. During the time many of these women's stories took place abortion was still illegal. If you wanted an abortion you needed to have money or risk an unsafe procedure. The reality was that getting an abortion could leave you sterile or even kill you. I can see why so many women were forced into or made the decision to give their baby up for adoption.

What shocked me the most was how after these young women gave birth all they wanted was to be with their baby. I try to think of myself in their situation and I couldn't imagine raising a child. I'm a few years older than some of the pregnant girls in this story and I still couldn't imagine myself having a baby. Maybe it's because I'm not a mother, but I didn't understand how much of a connection a woman has with her baby. Even though these women may not have been ready to be mothers they wanted to be. Not being able to keep their babies changed them and hurt them for the rest of their lives.

Adoption isn't as great as it sounds. Giving your baby to a couple who can better care for it sounds commendable, but unless you go through it yourself you can't imagine how hard it is. Giving your baby up is like being stabbed, but the wound never heals. I sympathized with the women in this book. Many of them went through their experience alone and became a different person because of it. But because of their courage to share their stories many others are able to realize the reality of adoption during that time period.

Of course not all adoption is bad. If the mother is willing and receives the proper counseling she may be at peace with her decision, but that wasn't the case for the women in this book. I'm thankful that today, women who become pregnant at any age and for whatever reason, have more options available to them. Women deserve to decide what is best for them.

# Lawn Day

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*Kristi Lee Young*

**Course:** Fiction Writing (ENG 3380)

**Professor:** Martha Witt

**Student:** Kristi Lee Young

**Essay:** Lawn Day

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## **Assignment:**

This assignment required a 10-15 page short story, in which writers worked on developing character, setting, point of view, and other elements of fiction writing.

Students also went through a process of feedback, reflection, and revision, resulting in the final product.

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You don't know why you're here or how you even got here. Did you turn left at the second intersection instead of right? Did you take the shortcut by the post office or go the long way? You didn't even know this was your destination until you were on your knees, sobbing into the overgrown grass of his front lawn. This is the third time you ended up somewhere by accident. The first time was when you found yourself shaking on a bench, staring up at the hospital that had been his home for six days. Two weeks ago, you caught yourself standing at his locker for half a class period, wondering why he hadn't met you there between classes. You sat on the bench until the rain soaked you to the point of freezing. You stood at his locker until a teacher jarred you back to reality. This time, you sobbed into the dirt, shaking in the early spring breeze until his mother scooped you into her arms.

It was in her arms that it all started to make sense. Her fingers were wrestling through the mess of your hair when a tickling on your leg alerted you to the grass

that was snaking up and down your bare calf. That's when you remembered. It's the second Wednesday of the month: Lawn Day. You used to come over here every Wednesday, but Lawn Day has always been your favorite. You would sit on the front stoop, watching him shove the roaring hunk of metal back and forth. As soon as he was done you would lay down in the freshly cut grass and talk about school and family and your plans for the future. What a waste of time.

"Layla's home," she whispers, shifting your weight from her chest to the tree beside her. "I'm going to go get dinner ready. Come in whenever you'd like." She's across the yard before you can protest. You watch as she sweeps his little sister through the front door before her seven year old brain can comprehend who is on the front lawn. You find yourself both grateful and amazed at the way this woman can read your mind. The last thing you need right now is a bunch of questions from the third grader that has come to adore you.

When his mother first pulled into the driveway you

were overcome with fear. Fear that she would scream at you, kick you off her lawn, because that's what you know you deserve. Instead, she pulled you into her arms, chased your tears away and invited you in for dinner. You should have expected it. She's too nice to treat you like the monster you are. You've always been jealous of him for his mother, but you could never tell him that. If she's a warm breeze, your mom is an icy storm.

You can't blame your mother too much, though. She raised you herself while dealing with the mass tragedy that was her marriage. The details are foggy, considering she'd like you to believe you were the product of a miraculous virgin birth. But even though she likes to pretend it never happened, the neighbors can't stop talking about the night your father fled town in nothing but his sneakers, being chased by your very pregnant, bat-wielding mother. She fell apart after that and all but froze the world out. When you needed a mother most, she was an icy wall, but not his mom. Mrs. Roberts has always been a warm embrace when you needed it most.

You still remember the first Wednesday so vividly. He had insisted that you needed to eat something other than cold pizza or cereal. He had forgotten that it was Lawn Day, but insisted you stay anyway. You sat on the stoop, sighing over the roaring mower every time he passed you. You wanted him to see you as bored and annoyed, when in reality, you were loving every second of it. The warmth of the sun on your skin, the sharp smell of lawn clippings and the smile that lit up his face every time you made a sarcastic smile or snide comment just felt right. That's the first time you realized that you had not made a mistake by talking to the new kid in class.

After the dinner you had been promised, he went to read Layla her bedtime story and left you alone with his mother. She was washing the dishes and humming some tune you didn't recognize. You shuffled over to the sink and croaked out an offer to assist. She just smiled at you and handed you a towel. She hummed

the sweet melody for another minute or two before turning to you with a big grin on her face.

"Okay, Girl Talk."

You just gave her a blank stare before you got to work drying the bowl in front of you. Your hesitation did nothing to discourage her, though. She launched into a story about her coworker's obsession with the mail guy, and then something about classroom moms and potato salad. You just barely followed the conversation as you swirled the dish towel around the sopping pot until your hand cramped. You felt like you had been thrown onto a stage and expected to perform with no proper training. Your throat was dry and your sweat was mixing with the dish water. Somehow, though, within minutes you were telling her everything. Not the stuff you talked about with him in the grass. You found yourself telling her stupid little things that you refused to tell anyone else. Things you didn't even know you felt until the words were hanging in the soapy air between the two of you.

"Margie said my hair looked like her dog's fur," you explained, shaking the damp towel in the air for emphasis.

"You'd make a pretty dog." She ran her pruned fingers through your hair, leaving behind a few stray suds. You went on like that until all the dishes were done and the soap suds had dissipated.

Once Layla was asleep, the three of you made hot chocolate and sat on the back porch watching the stars. It felt like the family you had always dreamed of. On the way home, you replayed her advice in your head, "Don't worry what those other kids think," and "You're unique but that's okay." They were just words, words you've probably heard a million times, but there was something about her soft voice and the way her eyes sparkled with sincerity that made them mean something they never had before. And now that's how you spend every Wednesday night. At least it was. It's been weeks since your last visit, eight to be exact.

A breeze rips across the front lawn, bringing you back to today. It's probably time to face the family that used to be like your own. You stand up, brush off your fading denim shorts, and enter the house that has been more of a home to you than the condo with your mom ever has. The overwhelming scent of lasagna and apple dish soap brings you to a grinding halt. The hot tears burn at the back of your eyes, threatening to fall any second. You could eat lasagna three times a day if it was acceptable, but he always hated it. You can't believe she made lasagna. She should hate you. She should have kicked you off her front lawn the second she found you there. But instead she welcomed you in with open arms and a pan full of gooey noodles and cheesy goodness.

The stomping of feet alerts you to the seven year old before she barrels into your side and cobras the life out of you. You want nothing more than to hold her tight and never let her go, but how could you? How could you pull her in close and pretend you aren't the reason she's the only Roberts child in the house. You fight the fist around your windpipe and let out a shaky breath before hugging her back. It's what she needs, you remind yourself, but you know that it's more for you than it is for her.

Just as fast as she appeared, the seven year old is gone. You look around the small kitchen and fight to keep your breathing steady. Nothing has changed. Of course it hasn't. It's only been a month, but to you, it feels like it's been years since you've been here, since you've seen any of them. You make your way over to the already set table and find your seat. For a second, everything feels normal again. Mrs. Roberts is moving about the kitchen joined by the clang of dishes. Layla skips back into view, her hands still damp and shiny. The tightness in your chest begins to subside as you take a deep breath. You can do this.

"Layla, sweetheart, help me get the silverware." Mrs. Roberts says, placing the steaming pan of pasta on the table. "How's school dear?"

"It's been hard." She pauses to give you a look only a mother would, making you hastily add, "Ya know, with graduation coming up and everything."

She gives a tight nod and you assume the conversation is dropped, but she disappears behind the fridge you hear her mumble over the clanking of ice meeting glass, "Yea, I do know." The weight of her words takes the air right out of your lungs. She is talking about school still, right?

"So, Layla, how was the spring pageant last week?" You change the subject as you fight to steady your shaky breath.

She launches into every detail, pushing herself up on her knees to lean in close to you. "And then they flung flower petals everywhere!" Her arms shoot up in the air nearly knocking the full glasses out of her mother's hands. "Sit down, Layla, and be careful." You blush and sit back in your seat. You shouldn't have gotten her started. You reach forward to take a sip of the drink you were just given, but freeze when you see what is in the glass: Coca cola.

"You – you never have soda in the house. It's a rule."

"I bought a bottle last month. I thought maybe you'd come over but..." Her smile falters as she trails off, but when she looks at you, you see in her eyes that she knows this isn't a small gesture. The lasagna, the soda, she knows exactly what she is doing. She is trying to make her home your home. She's trying to show you that even if he is not here, you still can be. This is too much. The air that escaped you never came back. Your lungs ache. You need to breathe but you've forgotten how. The walls are getting closer and you can't look away from the only empty seat at the table.

Well you did it again. The last thing you remember is gasping frantically, like a fish that can't find water. You remember seeing her face, eyes swimming with motherly concern. You vaguely recall the chair hitting the wall behind you as you fought to get out of there. The last thing you remember is running. You look

around and realize that you didn't get very far. Your knees are pushed up against your chest and your fingers are digging into the moist sand beneath you. You're not really sure why your scattered brain would choose the turtle sandbox in his backyard as your destination. The hospital, the locker, even his front yard all made sense. They each carried a significant amount of meaning for you and him, but not this. The only other time you had been in this sandbox was when the two of you were left in charge of Layla. He was making food for the two of you while you were on toy duty. When he found the two of you, you were taking turns smooshing your hands through moist lumps of sand that could barely be called castles. You looked up to see that his eyes were almost as wide as his mouth.

"You're playing in the sandbox," he had forced out.

"I just thought it would be fun. Did I do something wrong?" you shot out of the sand ready to douse the fire you seemed to have started.

"Layla hates the sandbox. She's terrified crabs are going to eat her toes." You both looked back to the little girl who was giggling uncontrollably as she smashed another lopsided sand tower.

"She sure looks petrified," you told him, dragging him over to the box to join you.

You may have opened up to Mrs. Roberts on the first day, and he was sold on you before the lawn mower was even off, but Layla was always just out of reach. She didn't seem to be too keen on the new girl that had waltzed into her home and family and you never knew quite how to bridge the divide. But that day the bridge just seemed to build itself. Not only was she laughing and playing with you, she conquered a fear right by your side. Layla had finally realized that you weren't just invading their home, but becoming part of the family, and so had you.

But that still doesn't tell you why your wonky brain took you here. This place has nothing to do with him and it's all about him, right? The reason you've been

mind-blanking and all over the place is because of your grief and guilt over him, isn't it? Your thoughts are interrupted when your eye catches a light in a window you know should be dark. You shake off the sand and make your way across the yard. There's an ever growing pit in your gut that propels you forward. You're on autopilot as you move the pieces of the old slide and climb up the rusty rungs like you used to do whenever you had a fight with your mom, or just needed to see him. You push the window open and climb through. The bean bag chair is where it always has been, right under the window. This time, however it isn't covered in the laundry he was too lazy to put away. In fact, the whole room looks a bit different. The bed is made, the garbage can is empty and the unruly pile of old notebooks that you're still not sure why he keeps is now neatly stacked in the corner of the room.

You push yourself up off of the bean bag and make your way over to what drew you here in the first place. His desk lamp is on and there are things scattered all over the desk. Someone was definitely here recently. You sink down into the desk chair, your heels digging into the carpet to slow your descent. Thankfully the squeak that is emitted is enough to be muffled by the closed door. You fight the feelings of *déjà vu* and go through the items on the desk. The first thing you pick up is a plastic bag full of used needles. The pit in your stomach deepens. You knew what he was doing, but this is the first time you've seen the evidence. You push the needles away and pick up a blue notebook. It's open to a page that just has names scribbled all over it. Mom. Layla. Aunt Michelle. Little Shelly. Mr. Tomlin. But one name is written over and over again. Yours. You furiously flip through pages to find out what this means. There are more pages with same names over and over, then there are pages that are filled with scribbles. You notice that each page has a date in the corner and flip back to the first page you saw. March 9th. The last Lawn Day you spent with him. You will never forget your first Lawn Day, but the last one is what has haunted you for the past two months.

You were sitting out front just like every other month. The lawn mower had been abandoned by the side of the house and he was lying beside you. You focused on the breeze and the swish of leaves hitting leaves as you waited for him to break the silence. The breeze picked up, disrupting the wind chime by the front door. He wasn't going to say anything. You heaved a heavy sigh in his direction but you were only answered with more wind. Your fists clenched leaving you with two handfuls of grass and dirt. "It sure is cold out here, isn't it?"

"I'm not cold," he answered, his eyes glued to the purpling sky.

"Of course you aren't."

He finally sat up, but his gaze went right through you, not actually seeing. He hadn't seen you in weeks. "If you have something to say, just say it."

"When are you going to stop?"

"Come on, we're talking about this again? It's not that big of a deal." You looked away, unable to face him as he fed you his tired excuses. "It helps me relax."

"That's what you said about the pot," You whispered, eyes fixed on the kid across the street as she chased her dog up and down the front lawn.

"Seriously babe." Goosebumps rose on your skin. That word hadn't sounded right for a while. "I'm a teenager. I'm just trying to have some fun," he urged.

The girl tripped and you watched as the dog ran back and licked her face. Her giggles floated across the street and made your heart ache. "Really? Would your mother agree when she finds out you got yourself kicked off the soccer team?" You pushed yourself up off the grass as he scrambled up after you.

"You're going to tell her?" He grabbed your wrist and yanked you to face him. "You wouldn't do that right?"

"No, that's your job." You spun around, ripping your arm from his grip. "Have a nice night." The words spilled out but the meaning got caught in your throat.

"Oh, so you're just gonna run away."

You stopped, but didn't turn around. "No. I'm giving you a choice. Me or that." You made a gesture to his arm and the marks you knew were hidden under his sleeve.

He stood there watching as you drove off. You fought the urge to look back, to turn around. You remember that urge all too well. You had no desire to go back to him, to apologize or hold him tight. No, the pull you were feeling was to collapse in his mother's arms or curl up in a blanket fort with Layla. The first pang of regret was that you wouldn't get to try Mrs. Roberts' homemade meatloaf and the second was that you would miss Layla's spring show at school. Sure, you were going to miss him and leaving him hurt, but the boy you left on that lawn was not the kid you met in Geometry on his first day at Lincoln High or the boy that gave you a place to eat at least once a week so you weren't always alone, and he was not the boy you had fallen in love with over the last two years. The person standing on that front lawn, holding your arm until his fingers left red outlines on your skin was not a person at all, but a drug. The pot, the heroin, they had transformed him into one of them and you weren't interested.

The next day you saw him in school but held your ground. You had to be tough to get results, right? Wrong. The next week you started to see him less and less. Wednesday came and went, but on Thursday, he was nowhere to be found. You were worried, but way too stubborn to call him. You distracted yourself at home, eating cold pizza and watching the same two movies over and over. Around 3 am, sprawled out on the sofa, you were awoken by your cellphone ringing. It was her, Mrs. Roberts. You almost didn't answer, afraid she just wanted to convince you to take him back because you probably would have caved, especially coming from her.

That's not what she was calling about. Through the sobs you were able to make out party and overdose, hospital and critical. That's when the guilt truck hit you square in the face. You weren't helping him by giving up on him,

you were killing him. You woke your mom because you thought she would care if you weren't there when she woke up, but you were wrong. She waved you off and went right back to snoring loudly. You went to the hospital, but never made it to his room. You saw Layla curled up in a plastic chair next to her frantic mother. You wanted to hold them both, sob into them as they did the same, but your feet wouldn't move. You couldn't face them. Not after you put him there.

You look back down at the page with your name all over it. You know what that page has to be; his demons, the reasons he had to stab himself with needles to get through a day. And your name is on there at least twelve times. "I am such a monster." You were simply thinking out loud so the response causes you to jump and the chair to squeal in protest.

"No you're not."

"How did you know I was in here?"

She gives a small chuckle. "I knew every time you were in here. I'm a mom, it's my job to know everything." Her face dropped as soon as the words were out of her mouth. You recognized that spark in her eyes from your own reflection, but refused to believe it.

"Why don't you hate me?" She reels back like you hit her before her face calms and she sits down on the bed right across from you.

"Let me ask you something first. Do you hate me? Do you think I'm a terrible mother?"

"Never." You answer honestly. Yours, sure, but never his.

"Well why not?" There are so many reasons that you find yourself unable to articulate it, so you just let her go on. "I ignored the signs. I knew something was off, it was pretty obvious, but I just let it be. I just figured it was normal teenage drama, but I should have known." She wipes her face as if the mask she has been putting on is physical. She looks back up at you and there's that spark again. It's almost like you're looking in a mirror. Everything you've been feeling for the past four weeks

is reflected in the eyes of this woman. How could she possibly feel this way?

"But I did know. I walked away when he needed me most." Your face falls into your hands as you fight more tears from falling. You've cried enough for one lifetime. "I've never been to see him." You whisper it into your hands just loud enough for her to hear.

Her hands push yours away and grab either side of your face. She lifts your head so your eyes meet once again and for a second you think you're hallucinating as she says, "Me neither." You blink, waiting for her to laugh or send you some kind of signal that she's joking. You just figured that she would be there every chance she had. "I couldn't face him. Not after I failed him."

You want to tell her she's wrong. The words are burning in your mind, so many of them fighting to come out, to be spoken. You remain silent. You're not sure what you could say that this woman would believe. You are convinced that you are a monster and nothing she has said until just a few moments ago has even sunk into your stubborn brain, so what can you really say? You look back down at your hands, fighting with yourself. You clear your throat and the sound echoes in the eerie silence of his bedroom.

"I got a letter from that art school the other day. They liked my work, but they loved the essay," the essay that you stressed about for weeks and almost completely gave up on. The one that had you throwing out the whole application until she stopped you. Mrs. Roberts sat with you until one in the morning the day the application needed to be mailed out. She read and reread your words until she could recite them all from memory. Once again, she was the mom you never really had. "So, uh, thank you. Again." You look up slowly, your hands shaking, but before you can look into her eyes you are being pulled out of the chair and back into her arms as she echoes your words.

"Thank you."



# Honorable Mention

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## ***Christopher Arteaga***

Essay: Literary Naturalism in *Catching Fire*  
ENG 1500: Experiences in Literature  
Professor: Jason Myers

## ***David A. Diaz***

Essay: Mangos and How Understanding Them Adds to the Post-Colonial Analysis of *Abeng*  
ENG 2000: Methods of Literary Analysis  
Professor: Barbara Suess

## ***Julio Gonzalez***

Poem: To the Girl I Let Slip Away  
COMM 4453: Capstone  
Professor: Lorra Brown

## ***Bright Gyasi***

Essay: The Father-Son Study Plan  
ENG 1100: College Writing  
Professor: Jason Myers

## ***Cristian Reyes***

Essay: The Significance of Business Ethics  
MGT 3550: Values, Ethics, and Sustainability  
Professor: Jet Mboga

## ***Abigail Urena***

Essay: The Advantages of Language and Art  
HIST 1030: Foundations of Civilization  
Professor: Diana Davis Olsen

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*Sponsored by the Writing Across the Curriculum Program*

**Guidelines:** Only full-time, half-time and adjunct faculty may submit entries, and only three per course. Student papers must have been written for an undergraduate course at WPU in the 2016-17 school year and be previously unpublished. Maximum length is 3,000 words (about 12 typed pages). We welcome shorter pieces and both formal and informal writing.

### **Deadline: May 26, 2017**

**Judging:** An interdisciplinary team of faculty members will select the winners.

For contest information, please contact  
Liane Robertson, WAC Director, at [RobertsonL10@wpunj.edu](mailto:RobertsonL10@wpunj.edu) or visit  
<http://www.wpunj.edu/cohss/departments/english/writing-across-the-curriculum.dot>



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**300 POMPTON ROAD  
WAYNE, NJ 07470**