



Backspace

Volume 11

Backspace:
The Viterbo University Journal of First-year Writing

Volume 11
2022-2023

Faculty Advisor
Jacqueline Herbers, Ph.D.

Student Editors
Grace Monk
Carter Steger
Jessica Schneider

Cover Design
Grace Amundson

Published by the Viterbo English and World Languages Department

Acknowledgments

Special thanks go to the following:

- The members of the Viterbo English and World Languages Department, whose commitment to thoughtful, effective, inspiring writing instruction fuels the success of Viterbo's composition courses.
- The staff of the Viterbo Academic Resource Center: Director Jane Eddy, Administrative Assistant Kim Ghelfi, Writing Specialists Peter Dahl, Ben Larsen, and Judy Ulland. Their discerning and judicious consultations assist many students each week in meeting their academic goals.
- The staff members of the Todd Wehr Memorial Library who are always available to help students find what they need to succeed.
- All the students who submitted their work to *Backspace*. This volume symbolizes their achievements.

Table of Contents

Backspace:	1
Acknowledgments.....	2
Welcome English Composition Students from the Chair of English	4
Course Overviews	5
English 103.....	5
English 104.....	5
English 105.....	5
English 195.....	5
The Gengler Awards	6
The Todd Wehr Memorial Library	7
Further Opportunities for Writing and Publishing at Viterbo.....	9
Student Publications.....	9
Academic Opportunities.....	9
Researched Argument	10
Mackenzie Wanta: “The Positive Effect of Fasting on Cancer”	12
The Positive Effect of Fasting on Cancer	13
Chloe Swanson: “The Emotional Costs of Carrying Student Debt”	20
The Emotional Costs of Carrying Student Debt.....	21
Logan Jansurak: “Banning Conversion Therapy: Protecting America’s Most Vulnerable”	26
Banning Conversion Therapy: Protecting America’s Most Vulnerable.....	27
Ruby Brisco: “The War on Drugs is a War on People”	37
The War on Drugs is a War on People	38
Literary Analysis	45
Kylie Krahn: “The Threat of Aging in Everyday Use”	48
The Threat of Aging in Everyday Use	49
Payton Harper: “Mental Illness and the Patriarchy of Marriage”	56
Mental Illness and the Patriarchy of Marriage	57
Gabrielle Cornell: “Lemonade and the Saxophone as Essential Plot Points”	63
Lemonade and a Saxophone as Essential Plot Points.....	64

Welcome English Composition Students from the Chair of English

“A writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things, he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them.”

--William Stafford, *A Way of Writing*

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to *Backspace*, a collection of student writing from Viterbo University's first-year composition classes. Many of you have purchased *Backspace* as required reading for your English 103, 104, or 105 section. We in the English department hope you enjoy the essays and find them insightful and instructive. When your semester-long composition class has concluded, perhaps you, too, will want to add your voice to the *Backspace* conversation by submitting your own work for next year's edition.

This year's edition includes instructor assignments for the student essays to aid in discussions about reading and understanding expectations.

With sincere best wishes for success in your academic career,

Vickie Holtz Wodzak

Associate Professor and Chair

Department of English and World Languages

Course Overviews

English 103

In this introduction to college writing, students work collaboratively, learning to read closely in order to summarize, analyze, and respond to a variety of texts. Students gain instruction in research methods and strategies of argumentation, as well as essentials of argumentative writing such as thesis, evidence, organization, and sentence-level effectiveness. By semester's end, students will write a short thesis-driven argument supported by library research. A grade of C is required to pass the course. Placement into this course requires an ACT verbal score of 18-22. Prerequisite to ENGL 104. WCI, IL

English 104

The second of two required freshman composition courses in Viterbo University's general education curriculum, this course extends the focus on reading a variety of texts; argumentation, including literary analysis; research; and the collaborative writing process established in ENGL 103. By semester's end, students write a researched argument using library resources. Prerequisite to all other English classes. A grade of C is required to pass the course. Prerequisite: grade of C or higher in 103 or transfer placement. WCI, IL

English 105

In this compressed introduction to composition, students develop skills in reading and argument through practice, guidance, and collaborative learning. In addition to reading texts critically, writing frequently, and completing several major assignments, students work on their writing in small group settings. Writing assignments include literary analysis and researched arguments using library sources. A grade of C is required to pass. Prerequisite: placement. WCI, IL

English 195

Designed specifically for students enrolled in the Honors Program, this first-year writing seminar facilitates students' development into skilled practitioners of college-level argument through practice, guidance, and collaborative learning. In addition to reading complex texts critically, writing frequently, and completing several major assignments of increasing complexity, students will work with a similar group in a lab setting on the processes of writing. Writing assignments include literary analysis and researched argument essays using sources as wide ranging as literature, visual sources, film, and scholarly articles. Topics or themes for the course vary from year to year. Restricted to students admitted to the Honors Program. WCI, IL

The Gengler Awards

Named after FSPA member and longtime member of Viterbo's English Department, the Sister Maureen Gengler awards honor outstanding student essays written in Viterbo composition courses. Cash awards of up to \$100 are presented to the winners at the annual English department senior recognition breakfast in May. Essays that receive a grade of A, A- or A/B are eligible to be submitted for consideration, though no more than two essays can be submitted from any individual section of English 099, 103 or 104. Honors students in English 195 are also eligible for a separate Gengler award. Instructions regarding deadlines and how to format an essay submitted for the Gengler are available on the Viterbo website.

In this issue of *Backspace*, one 2018-2019 English 105 Gengler award winner is included:

- Evan Espelien for his Researched Argument Essay, "Government Space Exploration: Getting to the Final Frontier."

The Todd Wehr Memorial Library



<https://viterbo.edu/library>, reference@viterbo.edu, 608-796-3269

As a first-year student at Viterbo University, you will be researching and writing papers and exploring new resources. The library and librarians at Viterbo wish to support your research process by providing you with both quality resources and outstanding service.

Inside the library and remotely we can answer your questions through our Reference services via chat, e-mail, or in-person. If you need more in-depth assistance, fill out the Research Consultation form (linked above the chat box on the library's web page), and we will set up a personal appointment.

At the Main Desk you can check out materials, pick up reserve items, sign up for a group study room, or check out equipment such as headphones, cameras, laptops, and iPads. The library has several computer labs and Wi-Fi. We have print and online reference resources, scores, streaming and DVD videos, CDs, books for adults and children, e-books, print and e-journals, as well as online databases.

The library website at <https://viterbo.edu/library>, is your central stop for information. Begin searching our catalog for books, articles, journals, music, and videos, many of which are available online from our site. If we don't own the item you need, however, simply submit a request through our online interlibrary loan form, and we'll locate it at another library, and notify you when it arrives for free.

Searching for articles is easier now than it's ever been, and you'll be accessing tens of thousands of journals, magazines, and newspapers from the Research > Databases menu. You may choose general databases, such as Academic Search Complete, or specific ones such as CINAHL Plus, Literature Resource Center, or the Naxos Music Library. We also have access to tens of thousands of streaming videos in the Academic Video Online database. After the library closes (normally at midnight, five nights a week), Einstein's, our 24/7 cybercafe, remains open for after-hours printing and study.

Navigating your way through the huge amount of information available may be confusing. Whenever you're stumped, please feel free to ask library staff for help. Remember, we're always here to help you with questions!

The Viterbo University Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource Center, located on the third floor of Murphy Center, is staffed by professional writing specialists who are ready to help you with your writing. You can make a 30-minute appointment to work one-on-one with a writing specialist on brainstorming, final edits, and anything in between. You may request help on any written coursework, from English 103 essays to biology lab reports, and the specialists are happy to answer questions about citation styles (MLA, APA, AMA, Chicago Style), too. In addition to reviewing academic writing, the specialists can assist you with non-course-related projects like résumés, cover letters, and scholarship applications.

To make the most out of your writing appointment, here are a few basic steps to follow:

- Ensure your assignment sheet and/or rubric is accessible as it can help direct you (and the specialist) during your meeting.
- Think of questions or concerns you would like to address with the specialist's help. Is your thesis accomplishing what your instructor expects? Have you thoroughly developed your paragraphs? How clear is the overall organization? Questions like these will often improve your writing far more than simply focusing on grammar—though sentence-level concerns are fair game, too.
- Be prepared and on time for your appointment. If you have elected to email your paper and receive written feedback, send your work as a Word document to the specialist ahead of the appointment time and include questions and concerns in the body of your message.
- Approach the Academic Resource Center as an additional learning experience. The idea is not that writing specialists will proofread papers for you, but that you can use them as a resource to help guide you through the writing process, prompting you to think critically and produce your best work.

To make an appointment, give us a call at (608) 796-3190, or stop in between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday or between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Friday, and our front desk worker can assist you. Better yet, visit Starfish Connect (<https://vitearlyalert.starfishsolutions.com/starfish-ops>) via Moodle, locate “Writing Assistance (Undergraduate)” at the bottom of the homepage, and schedule an appointment anytime.

Academic Resource Center Writing Specialists,
Peter Dahl and Ryan Russell

Further Opportunities for Writing and Publishing at Viterbo

If you have enjoyed your first-year writing courses, and have produced work of which you are proud, you might consider submitting your writing to *Backspace*. To do so, you can contact the Faculty Advisor for *Backspace*, English professor Jacqueline Herbers. Beyond *Backspace*, though, Viterbo offers co-curricular and extra-curricular writing opportunities.

Student Publications

- *Lumen*, Viterbo's student newspaper, is written and edited by Viterbo students. There are paid positions for *Lumen* student journalists and courses in the English Department that help students prepare to write or edit for *Lumen*. For more information, contact faculty advisor, English professor Jacqueline Herbers.
- *Touchstone*, Viterbo's magazine that features art and literature submitted by Viterbo students, staff, and faculty. There are paid editorial positions available for students who work on *Touchstone*. For more information, contact faculty advisor, English professor Vincent James.

Academic Opportunities

The Viterbo English Department offers writing emphasis major and minor programs, which include courses in advanced argumentation, creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry, feature writing, and news writing. Seniors compose capstone projects, senior theses, which showcase their best works. An individual's capstone project might be a collection of short stories, a novella, a memoir, or another type of large-scale writing project.

Former Viterbo writing students have gone on to successful careers in journalism, publishing, arts administration, education, law, and other challenging fields. Graduates of the English major have attended graduate school at several regional universities, as well as such prestigious institutions as Yale and Oxford. Graduates have published in some of the best literary journals in America and have won major national prizes for their works. For more information on the English major and minor programs you can, talk to your instructor, visit the English Department page on the Viterbo website, or contact the Chair of the English Department, Professor Vickie Holtz Wodzak.

Researched Argument

Assignment sheet provided by Dr. Jackie Herbers.

Course Outcomes:

1. Invent, draft, revise, and edit effectively for various audiences and purposes.
2. Write coherent and unified arguments.
3. Apply disciplinary conventions in writing and interpreting texts.
4. Support claims with credible, relevant, and appropriate sources.
6. Communicate in direct, error-free language.

From the Syllabus: 6-8 pages. Process includes outline, conferences, rough draft, peer-review and final draft. For your final major paper, you will argue your thesis (the one you proposed in your Research Question Proposal). You will need to support your argument with at least six credible sources and **one must be a book**. In this paper, you will also need to present and refute counter arguments in order to strengthen your own.

Thesis Statement: At this point, you need to be working with a strongly argumentative thesis statement. Be sure your thesis statement contains the two elements of topic and assertion.

Support: Not all your paper will be the argument itself. You will need to provide one or two paragraphs of background information. You will also need to present and refute two important counter arguments. The remainder of your paper should be spent explaining the major points that support your thesis. Each paragraph should be structured using the point, support, assertion model. You will also need to organize those main points in a clear, convincing manner in which you leave the reader with your most important or most persuasive point. Please do your best to cite two different sources per paragraph.

Audience: You must choose a specific audience, and clearly list it at the top of your essay. Ask yourself, who am I trying to persuade, or who would benefit the most from my research? Example audiences include the following: a legislator, the leader of a group or organization, a business leader, school administrators, or researchers at a conference. You must also be specific. If you choose an organization as your audience, which particular organization will you address? If you choose a legislator, what is the name of the legislator you are hoping to convince?

Avoid: “I” statements, “you” statements, slang, clichés, things, stuff, contractions

Diction: Your word choice should be at the college level. Review the writing concisely activity completed earlier this semester for more information.

Sources: You need six. They can come directly from your Annotated Bibliography, but you can also add to them or replace sources you no longer think will work.

- One must be a book or a part of a book.
- Two must be articles from scholarly journals.
- The remaining three, then, are your choice. You may choose from reputable and credible Internet sources, other periodical sources, or more journal articles or books. You may

also choose to use more unique sources such as CD's, DVD's, T.V. or radio programs or transcripts, or you may want to conduct an interview. If you want to conduct an Internet search on your topic, please use Google Scholar as your search engine.

- Try searching *Credo Reference* to find information for your background paragraph(s).
- **Source restrictions:** You may not cite *Wikipedia*, *About*, *Buzzle*, *eHow*, *Sparknotes*, *Schmoop*, *eNotes* or similar web sites. You may only cite **one** article from *Opposing Viewpoints*.

Page limits:

- At least six (all the way to the bottom).
- No more than eight.
- Your works cited page is an additional page.

Parts of this Project:

- Outline (see page 3)
- Rough draft/peer-review
- Final draft
- Revision Statement (see page 5)

Special Note:

- You will receive a zero on this paper if no attempt is made to format according to MLA, no attempt is made to include in-text citations (50% or more of the paper is without citations), if no attempt is made to include a works cited page, or if plagiarism is present.

Mackenzie Wanta: “The Positive Effect of Fasting on Cancer”

Mackenzie Wanta is a sophomore dietetics major with a minor in sports science. She is a member of the Student Dietetics Association and is the Social Media Editor for the *Lumen*. Wanta’s essay “The Positive Effect of Fasting on Cancer” addresses the impact nutrition has on the human body when it undergoes intensive treatments. Originally,

Wanta wanted to write about fasting, but soon realized that was too broad. After conducting research, she found a focused topic that both intrigued her and pertained to her major. Her biggest challenge when writing this essay was finding academic sources to support her counter argument. When asked what advice she would have for writers struggling with research she said, “Take your time and be thorough when looking for sources, there is always something out there, you just have to be patient.”

Mackenzie Wanta

Dr. Vickie Holtz Wodzak

English 105

02 November 2020

The Positive Effect of Fasting on Cancer

Anxiety, worries, and questions build up as your doctor explains your worst nightmare. You have been diagnosed with cancer. The most unbearable, weakening disease lives and grows inside you. You know this journey is going to be long and brutal, but all you worry about is getting on the other side of this diagnosis. Different courses of treatment are thrown at you, and suddenly your life consists of spending hours upon hours in the hospital receiving treatment. These treatments come with pain and suffering, which can make this cancer journey even more unbearable. Knowing this, you and your loved ones may be wondering what techniques could increase the effectiveness of traditional treatments, if there are any at all. Periods of fasting, intermittent, short, or long, may be the answer to treating your cancer and increasing therapy effectiveness. Fasting allows for a trouble-free, more effective, and possibly shorter treatment process. A shorter process allows you to spend less time in hospitals, and more time with loved ones during this difficult and transitional time in your life. Fasting can not only improve therapy effectiveness and treat cancer, but it can improve your overall quality of life while enduring this aggressive disease. Altogether, it can be proven that periods of fasting treats cancer.

Extended periods of fasting may influence your body's cells to use different resources to reduce cell division and create stress-resistant properties. Cancer cells bypass the body by allowing their damaged cells to continue through the cell cycle, regardless of the body's processes that are in place to prevent this. This disease takes over the body and there is no

designated treatment, other than this fasting technique, thus far that solely targets these ever-dividing cells. Cancer cells always divide, but they are stimulated by specific stimuli, one of which is stress. When a healthy body detects stress, it releases a neurotransmitter to lower it, but in a body invaded by cancer cells, this process occurs adversely. After an extended period of fasting, possibly longer than 24 hours, your body's cells will begin to use energy that is generated from the metabolism of broken-down organelles, fats, and proteins that are available (Lee and Longo 3311). As your cells begin to use a different source of energy, their division reduces because they are not getting the energy they are used to through your normal diet. This reduced cellular division will allow your body's normal cells to slow division, as well as the cancer cells which is beneficial when done simultaneously with other forms of therapy. Reduced cell division also provokes cells to become resistant to stress, which also reduces the division of cells. The reduction of division and increased stress-resistant properties in your body resulting from a period of fasting can result in decreased progression of cancer. This decreased progression of cancer proves that periods of fasting are a very effective treatment option.

Not only can fasting target your body's cells to reduce cancer progression, but it can also target the substances in your body. Fasting can reduce plasma glucose, glycemia, and increase insulin sensitivity. Plasma glucose levels and glycemic levels are heightened with cancer, which increases the overall progression of cancer. In pre-clinical findings, plasma glucose and glycemic levels were shown to decrease after a period of intermittent fasting (Turbitt et al., 2019). This finding explains the effect of adding fasting into a cancer treatment process, as it targets specific substances in the body that would instead affect the cancer. A period of fasting also increases insulin sensitivity, which is known to influence cancer cells. Insulin sensitivity is the level of sensitivity someone has to the release of insulin in the body, which can also cause high blood

sugar levels. The same pre-clinical findings support the improvements of insulin sensitivity when it was shown to occur in their intermittent fasting intervention trials (Turbitt et al., 2019). When insulin sensitivity is improved, blood sugar levels will decrease, thus decreasing the progression of cancer. Plasma glucose, glycemia, and insulin sensitivity are all linked together and can equally affect the spread of cancer. When periods of fasting, intermittent or extended periods of time, are implemented during cancer treatment, these substance levels are more easily controlled leading to a slower and decreased spread of cancer.

Chemotherapy is delivered with many side effects that can decrease your overall quality of life. Notable side effects are hair loss, nausea, vomiting, and decreased brain function among many. Cancer is traditionally fought off using this violent therapy, along with many others you may choose from. Extended periods of fasting before and after chemotherapy treatment can decrease these effects and may allow for increased effectiveness of the chemotherapy. A case study was done where cancer patients participated in fasting for an extended period before and after chemotherapy treatment. One case involved a patient fasting for 62 hours before treatment and continued fasting for 24 hours after treatment. The recovery of this patient's blood cells was shown to increase, allowing for a quicker and more effective chemotherapy process when fasting was involved. This case noted, "Her complete blood count showed consistent improvement during the cycles in which chemotherapy was combined with fasting" (Safdie et al., 2009). In another case, the patient fasted for 48 hours before treatment and continued fasting for 56 hours after treatment. This patient's side effects decreased significantly, and the tumor sizes in their body decreased when implementing fasting into their treatment routine (Safdie et al., 2009). By incorporating fasting into their chemotherapy routine, patients in this case study had a more

bearable, and effective treatment experience. You can have the same experience by implementing fasting into your therapy routine.

Intermittent fasting, a different form of fasting, allows chemotherapy to alter its process by directly attacking your cancer cells. As fasting can improve quality of life during chemotherapy, and its overall effectiveness, chemotherapy is still used to target rapidly dividing cells, whether they are healthy or not. This use of therapy can be aggressive on you, which I have argued to be decreased by fasting, but the experience would be greatly improved if the therapy targeted damaged cells in the first place. It has been shown in recent studies on animals that the use of intermittent fasting allows for the protection of healthy cells during the chemotherapy process. Healthy cells were shown to be protected, while the cancer cells were more prominently targeted. Also, intermittent fasting over two days was shown to reduce the number of new tumors found in the body (Mattson 51). This type of fasting may halt the progression of your cancer, as well as directly target the cancer cells by modifying the chemotherapy process. Intermittent fasting, along with extended periods of fasting during treatment, may drastically improve your chemotherapy experience and overall well-being.

Periods of fasting may seem like the ultimate answer to cancer treatment and therapy effectiveness. Others, however, may believe this process decreases your immunity. The refuting side may argue the idea that if you do not consume enough nutrients, your body will not be able to nourish your cells and immune system properly. Along with that, the other side may note if you do not get a specific amount of nutrients, your weight will decrease drastically, especially paired with your treatments. The other side can prove drastic weight loss and overall decreased immunity combine to be a recipe for disaster, especially when cancer is in the equation (Harvard 2020). As those are valid reasons to stray away from the idea of fasting, studies have shown that

periods of fasting allow the regeneration of the entire immune system. A study that observed people over the span of four months who went through a process of fasting has shown many indications of increased immune function. After four months of practicing periods of fasting, red blood cell numbers increased, as well as hemoglobin levels (Brandhorst et al 89). High red blood cell count allows the body to regenerate new blood cells quicker, aiding in the healing and immune process. In addition, high hemoglobin levels in the blood decrease the body's risk of infection, which promotes a stronger immune system. Finally, the study revealed that the number of lymphocytes were shown to increase after a period of fasting. Lymphocytes, also known as white blood cells, are a paramount key to your body's immune system. These cells detect foreign matter, infections, or diseases, and remember them to fight them off the next time they enter your body. These bodily reactions can be attributed to the use of fasting, and lead to the regeneration of your entire immune system.

Cancer treatments have been around for decades and have continually caused the same side effects. This disease is violent on your body, and there are very few ways to make the process more bearable for you. It is vital that you, and every cancer patient in the world, have an easier, more efficient treatment process to spend the majority of your time with loved ones rather than being restricted to a hospital bed. Fasting, in extended or shorter periods of time, can allow you to have a better quality of life through this frightening disease. Periods of fasting allow your body to respond in different ways in the absence of nutrition. This new response provokes your body to use alternative processes to function, which results in cancer fighting effects. Fasting should be a more common option to increase your comfort during brutal treatments and should be implemented over medications or invasive procedures. It is due time that we find more ways

for the rough journey of cancer to become smoother for you and your family, in ways that fasting is capable of.

Works Cited

- Brandhorst, Sebastian, et al. "A Periodic Diet that Mimics Fasting Promotes Multi-System Regeneration, Enhanced Cognitive Performance, and Healthspan." *Cell Metabolism*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2015, pp. 86- 99
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1550413115002247>,
[doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2015.05.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2015.05.012).
- "Is Intermittent Fasting Safe for Older Adults?" *Harvard Health Letter*, vol. 45, no. 6, 2020, pp. 5, <https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=142482550&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Lee, C., and V. D. Longo. "Fasting Vs Dietary Restriction in Cellular Protection and Cancer Treatment: From Model Organisms to Patients." *Oncogene*, vol. 30, no. 30, 2011, pp. 3305-3316, [doi:10.1038/onc.2011.91](https://doi.org/10.1038/onc.2011.91).
- Mattson, Mark P., Valter D. Longo, and Michelle Harvie. "Impact of Intermittent Fasting on Health and Disease Processes." *Ageing Research Reviews*, vol. 39, 2017, pp. 46-58. *WorldCat.org*, [doi:10.1016/j.arr.2016.10.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.arr.2016.10.005).
- Safdie, Fernando M., et al. "Fasting and Cancer Treatment in Humans: A Case Series Report." *Aging (Albany, NY.)*, vol. 1, no. 12, 2009, pp. 988-1007. *MEDLINE*, [doi:10.18632/aging.100114](https://doi.org/10.18632/aging.100114).
- Turbitt, William J., et al. "Targeting Glucose Metabolism to Enhance Immunotherapy: Emerging Evidence on Intermittent Fasting and Calorie Restriction Mimetics." *Frontiers in Immunology*, vol. 10, 2019. *WorldCat.org*, [doi:10.3389/fimmu.2019.01402](https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2019.01402).

Chloe Swanson: “The Emotional Costs of Carrying Student Debt”

Chloe Swanson is a marketing major with a potential minor in graphic design at Viterbo. She is involved with *Touchstone*, serving as the graphic designer for the editing staff. Her essay focuses on the mental health of students and graduates possessing substantial amounts of student debt and how it affects their lives. Swanson said that she wanted to explore the “quiet part” of having student debt regarding how it affects the mental health of individuals, claiming that mental health is not talked about enough in society. A struggle she encountered when writing this essay was finding articles that had information regarding mental health and student debt together. After completing her essay, Swanson said one area she would expand upon would be exploring more solutions to improve mental health overall.

Chloe Swanson

Professor Herbers

English 103

23 November 2020

Audience: President Elect Joe Biden

The Emotional Costs of Carrying Student Debt

“Student debt is crushing the lives of millions of Americans. How does it happen that we can get home mortgage or purchase a car with interest rates half of that being paid for student loans?” as said by Bernie Sanders. The enormous weight of having a student loan debt is markedly different than the feeling of having mortgage or credit card debt. Those borrowers can declare bankruptcy, an option unavailable to student loan borrowers, and not even death can absolve a person or one's family from the responsibility of paying off the loans. The rising levels of student debt proves to be having a profoundly negative effect on the pace at which young adults are starting families and buying homes, career choice, and student’s mental health,

As student loan debt continues to rise, concerned college students and alumni fear for their future. Akers claims annual student borrowing had “quintupled from a decade prior in 1986, to about \$22 billion in today’s dollars or \$2,400 per student. Those borrowing levels pale in comparison to those seen today. Over the course of the following 3 decades, annual borrowing quintuplicated yet again to more than 100 billion, or about \$7,000 per student” (1). The student loan debt average continues to increase in the nation, and certain aspects of the quality and standard of living after graduation have plummeted down because of it.

The pace at which young adults are starting families and buying homes is drastically changing due to student debt. Amid concern that high levels of consumer debt may be slowing

the housing market recovery, many media outlets and financial experts have suggested that rising student loan debt is discouraging home-buying among young adults. “The stated rationale is that young adults, who now leave college with an average of \$23,000 in student loan debt (Federal Reserve Bank of New York 2013; Rothstein and Rouse 2008), are either purposefully avoiding home ownership because they do not wish to take on additional debt or are unable to get approval for a mortgage due to their high debt loads and poor credit scores. (Houle). Houle also when on to state, "In a brief report, Brown and Caldwell (2013) use Equifax data to examine the link between outstanding student loan debt and home mortgage debt among a sample of college-going and non-college-going young adults". In this report they found three key findings. The first one being that young adult student loan debtors have had higher rates of home ownership than those without debt in the past. This makes sense considering student loan debtors are more educated and have higher incomes than those without debt, many of whom did not attend college. Second, they reported that in the recent 2012 recession, student loan debtors had marginally lower rates of homeownership than non-debtors. Lastly, they found that in recent years young adults with student loan debt have lower credit scores than those without debt (Houle). These three key factors play a tremendous role when looking at how student debt affects homeowners. Buying a home has never been easy, yet individuals with student debt must try and manage their money and debt while attempting to make more purchases in order to survive.

Some may say that student debt does not affect many people, but study proves that to be immensely wrong. “Calling it a crisis misrepresents the situation,” says Sandy Baum, senior fellow for the Center on Education Data and Policy at the Urban Institute. “Not everyone with student debt is having his or her life ruined. The truth is that access to student loans increases educational opportunities for lots of people, and for many it’s an investment that pays off well.

It's also true that some people have severe problems because of the loans they've taken out.” “It's not,” she adds, “monolithic” (Harris). Although it is true that not everyone is suffering or has student debt, a study shows “two-thirds (66%) of college seniors who graduated in 2011 had student loan debt, with an average of \$26,600 for those with loans” (Reed and Cochrane). Majority of students have or will accumulate some sort of student debt, so, therefore these issues apply to a large amount of the population.

Another defying issue of student debt is the uncertainty of career choices. The debt that is taken on in order to allow one to pursue their dreams can later turn into a burden that requires them to then abandon those plans. One may find themselves sacrificing a job that offers more fulfillment and purpose for a career with a higher salary. “The average medical school debt in 2011 was \$170,000, and by 2017 it increased to \$190,000. High debt burden has been shown to affect career choices for residents in primary care specialties” (Gray and Kaji). Because of the increase in student debt, some people, especially in the medical field, are considering either different or higher paying jobs in order to relieve some of the weight of carrying these loans. Gray went on to say, “Out of 427 residents surveyed, 210 (66.2%) believed their debt would influence their future job choice” (Gray and Kaji). Not only does student debt affect student's career choices, but also how they feel about themselves and the world around them.

Depression proves to be one of the most severe effects of student debt and what's not talked about enough is the emotional weight graduates carry. Ulbrich states, “Symptoms of burnout and depression, emotional exhaustion, and increasing cynicism were commonly associated with a student's or resident's increasing educational debt in the results of a survey of US medicine residency programs and a cohort of internal medicine residents.” (Ulbrich and Kirk). Debt continues to take its toll on students and in some cases, it has even caused depression

and anxiety. “In the USA, research has suggested that up to 17% of students have depression, and 12% an anxiety disorder. Some research suggests that prevalence rates for mental disorders are similar in students and non-students, while other suggests students with loan debt have poorer mental health” (Richardson, Elliott, and Roberts). Student loan debt is causing harsh effects on both students and alumni, but depression and mental exhaustion proves to be the worst of it.

As student debt continues to rise, study shows there will be extremely negative effects on the pace at which students purchase a home, their career choice, and mental health status. Students are experiencing significant challenges repaying their loans, which can in turn, affect their ability to build wealth and access a healthy and fulfilled life. As Bernie said, “Student debt is crushing the lives of millions of Americans” and it is only going to continue to rise unless something is done about it.

Works Cited

- Akers, Beth, and Matthew Chingos. *Game of Loans: The Rhetoric and Reality of Student Debt* (The William G. Bowen Series). Chapter 1. Princeton University Press, 2016. Viterbo University.
- Gray, Kelsey, et al. "Influence of Student Loan Debt on General Surgery Resident Career and Lifestyle Decision-Making." *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, vol. 230, no. 2, 2020, pp. 173–81.
- Harris, Diane. "The Truth About Student Debt." *Newsweek Global*, vol. 173 Issue 5, p18-29.12p.
- Houle, Jason N., and Lawrence Berger. "Is Student Loan Debt Discouraging Homeownership among Young Adults?" *Social Service Review*, vol. 89, no. 4, 2015, pp. 589–621.
- Reed, K. "Student debt: an unsustainable problem." *Iowa Medicine: Journal of the Iowa Medical Society* [Iowa Med] 2006 Jul-Aug; Vol. 96 (4), pp. 23.
- Ulbrich, Timothy R., and Loren M. Kirk. "It's Time to Broaden the Conversation About Student Debt Crisis Beyond Rising Tuition Costs." *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, vol. 81, no. 6, 2017, p. 101.

Logan Jansurak: “Banning Conversion Therapy: Protecting America’s Most Vulnerable”

Logan Jansurak is a junior acting major with a minor in arts administration. He is the president of the Student Government Association, a member of the Student Theatre Project, and participates in a variety of theatre productions. Jansurak’s essay, “Banning Conversion Therapy: Protecting America’s Most Vulnerable,” addresses the issue of conversion therapy in the United States and the negative impact it has on LGBTQ+ youth. He found inspiration for his essay after reading *Boy Erased: A Memoir* by Garrard Conley, a story that recounts the author’s own experience undergoing conversion therapy. When writing his essay, Jansurak found addressing a topic as serious as conversion therapy to be rather challenging. He wanted to ensure his essay was both intriguing and inspirational, while also bringing light to a serious issue. If he had to give one piece of advice to other writers it would to “always choose a topic you are passionate it about, it makes the process easier.”

Logan Jancsurak

Herbers

English 105

15 April 2020

Banning Conversion Therapy: Protecting America's Most Vulnerable

The Trevor Project is a non-profit suicide prevention organization that works primarily with at-risk lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth. According to The Trevor Project, lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are five times more likely to have attempted suicide in comparison to heterosexual youth. The Trevor Project cites the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with this information. Conversion therapy is one of the factors that leads to these increased suicide rates amongst queer youth. Some argue that restrictions of conversion therapy infringe on the constitutional right to free speech or that conversion therapy methods such as the family systems therapeutic interventions model are acceptable. Conversion therapy does not allow for youth to express a freedom of religion, conversion therapy cannot change one's sexual orientation because it is a genetic trait, and conversion therapy is inhumane and torturous. For these reasons, The United States Congress should place a ban on all conversion therapy practices.

Conversion therapy is a variety of practices with the purpose of changing one's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Reasons for doing such are inspired by Western heteronormative society. Often fueled with religious motives, conversion therapy is common in the deep South where the Christian faith dominates the way of life. Although more common in the South, conversion therapy happens all across America. In a recent *Creighton Law Review* article, Tiffany Graham wrote that as of January 2018, "Almost 700,000 LGBTQ

individuals in the United States between the ages of 18 and 59 had received conversion therapy” (Graham). Conversion therapy has a wide variety of methods, targeted to change who someone is and how they feel. These methods include talk therapy, inducing nausea and vomiting, electroshock therapy, and hypnosis. As of September 2019, only nine states have banned conversion therapy practices (Graham). The federal government must act to create legislation stopping these harmful practices.

Studies show that conversion therapy leads to increased suicide rates. One in three LGBTQ youth will attempt suicide. In Bernadette Barton’s *Pray the Gay Away : The Extraordinary Lives of Bible Belt Gays*, she introduces the idea of LGBTQ life in the Bible Belt, also known as the American South. She writes, “Unfortunately, home is not a haven for many gay youths in the bible belt. A gay child with the bad luck to be born into a homophobic family risks becoming one out of the three gay youths who attempt suicide” (Barton). Most evangelical protestants of the South are raised to believe homosexuality is a sin. In these areas, suicide rates among LGBTQ youth are exponential. Additionally, conversion therapy is much more commonplace in this area of the country. Statistically, “youth whose families who responded negatively to their sexual identity were 8.4 times more likely to report attempting suicide, 5.9 times more likely to be depressed, 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs, and 3.4 times more likely to report engaging in risky sexual practices” (Barton). When families react negatively and put their LGBTQ children into conversion therapy, they are much more likely to harm themselves, either by attempting suicide or engaging in risky behavior.

Proponents of conversion therapy will argue that a ban on the treatment is an infringement upon one’s constitutional rights— particularly the first amendment. California’s Chapter 835 is a law that made it the first state in the country to ban mental health professionals

in performing conversion therapy (Clair). Some argue that Chapter 835 “bans a mental health provider from expressing his or her viewpoints about homosexuality as part of conversion therapy treatment” (Clair). Those in favor of conversion therapy will assert that laws such as Chapter 835 prohibit psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals from having freedom in their speech. Mental health professionals typically provide speech-based treatments, thus posing the question if this law infringes on first amendment rights. A variety of lower courts have reached different conclusions regarding the constitutionality of regulating mental health professionals and what defines speech (Clair). However, one court concluded, “The provision of healthcare treatments is not expressive conduct and thus not entitled to First Amendment protection because it is not attempting to convey a message but to provide treatment; therefore, such conduct is not entitled to First Amendment protection” (Clair). Conversion therapy is a treatment, not conduct that is communicating a message. Consequently, conversion therapy cannot be considered speech and is not an infringement of the first amendment.

As laws are made to ban conversion therapy as society knows it, supporters of conversion therapy are drawn to a new model. These interventions are known as the family systems therapeutic model. Doyle writes, “Family systems therapeutic interventions examine the historical pattern of emotional functioning and how the family’s anxiety levels may be inherited from previous generations and transferred to future children that fail to successfully differentiate from the unhealthy relational patterns of their families of origin” (Doyle). This is a method of conversion therapy that involves family interventions with a therapist, and seemingly could slip under the radar of government officials. The family systems therapeutic model could easily be passed off as family therapy that is not targeted at changing an individual’s sexual orientation

(Doyle). This very concept is problematic. It is still conversion therapy, regardless of how it is advertised. Conversion therapy needs to be clearly defined. Less violent or physical methods of conversion therapy, such as the family systems therapeutic model makes it more complicated. Congresspeople must make a clear definition of conversion therapy, that does not allow for loopholes.

Conversion therapy often forces youth into religious practices. A large portion of the conversion therapy in the United States is provided by religious and spiritual leaders. In fact, it is estimated that 57,000 youths in the country would participate in conversion therapy in a religious context by their eighteenth birthday (Graham). Pastors and spiritual guides across the country are using the guise of religion as a pretext for conversion therapy. There are many stories about people who once thought they were gay, but through the power of prayer, have now joined in marriage with a member of the opposite sex. Nonetheless, this does not mean their same-sex attraction has gone away. The individuals who “successfully” go through these religious treatments do not fundamentally change. And when they are children, this is not their choice.

Furthermore, the religious aspects these individuals are forced to endure is an infringement on their first amendment right to free exercise of religion. According to Romero, “The ultimate goal of conversion therapy from a religious standpoint is to change the person’s sexual orientation by submitting to God” (Romero). Conversion therapy amongst youth, forced to attend religious or spiritual therapies are being forced to participate in religious practices they do not agree with. Children should not be forced to participate in these practices. More often than not, these religious therapies are just a pretext for conversion therapy. They infringe on an individual’s right to freedom of religion when forced to participate. Forcing children to

participate in a religious conversion therapy could be considered unconstitutional if they are being threatened to participate, bringing a need to ban spiritual conversion therapy for youth.

Homosexuality is a genetic trait that cannot be altered. Trying to change one's sexual orientation is equivalent to someone attempting to permanently change their eye color. One can put a colored contact on, but underneath the facade, it is just the same eye color as before. Often this is shot down because homosexuals do not reproduce, so how could the gene prevail? It is interesting to note the leading theory, "that the genes that influence homosexual behavior might have other functions in the human body and thus, even though few homosexual individuals pass on those genes to children, the genes are perpetuated through heterosexual reproduction and have endured over the many millennia of human existence" (Homosexuality is Not a Mental Illness). The "gay gene" as many call it, could be linked to the another completely unrelated gene in the body.

Additionally, there have been many studies regarding the relationship between fraternal birth order and homosexuality. The fraternal birth order effect is the result of studies finding that older brothers increase the likelihood of homosexuality in later born male offspring. A study of over 5,000 men found if a man has one older brother, the odds of the younger brother being a homosexual are increased by thirty-eight percent. (Blanchard, et al.) There is significant evidence proving that homosexuality is an inherent genetic trait. Sexual orientation is as much of a choice as the color of one's skin.

Alfred Kinsey was an American biologist and sexologist, best known for founding the Institute for Sex Research and his two books, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Kinsey made groundbreaking discoveries in the areas of homosexuality at the time. His research is still notable today. He estimated that ten percent of the

population might be homosexual. Furthermore, he discovered that roughly sixty percent of adolescent boys experiment with homosexual conduct. This suggested that homosexuality was much more common than was believed. Moreover, homosexuality could be considered a normal part of sexual development. (Homosexuality is Not a Mental Illness). Homosexuality is natural, healthy, and a genetic trait that cannot be changed. Therefore, performing conversion therapy can be damaging and unhealthy, giving reason for a ban.

Lastly, conversion therapy is inhumane. There are two main categories of conversion therapy: religious and psychological. The psychological methods can be the most destructive. In these situations, “therapists apply a variety of techniques including induced nausea, vomiting or paralysis after exposing patients to homoerotic content, electroshock therapy, and having patients wear a rubber band around their wrist and snapping it every time they have a same-sex sexual thought” (Romero). These are cruel and unusual punishments for a trait people have no control over. Although some of these methods have been banned in certain states, they all still exist in others. The World Health Organization has declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder nearly thirty years ago. Conversion therapy methods as extreme as these reinforce the stigmatization of homosexuality “by treating gay people like they have a mental disorder” (Romero). In addition, there is no scientific evidence proving the success of conversion therapy. The lack of evidence that these dangerous methods work, should warrant Congress to work towards a ban on conversion therapy. This is torturous and inhumane and no living being should have to endure this suffering.

The United States Congress must act now to ban conversion therapy in all fifty states. Conversion therapy is inhumane, increases suicide, infringes on freedom of religion, and it is attempting to fix an unfixable genetic trait. Those who argue that a ban is unconstitutional or

would prefer the family systems therapeutic model must be stopped. Men, women, and children are suffering from this terrible practice every day in America. Members of congress must ask themselves, “If my child told me they were gay today, would I put them through torture tomorrow?” Why should anyone’s child have to face that?

Works Cited

- Barton, Bernadette. *Pray the Gay Away: The Extraordinary Lives of Bible Belt Gays*. NYU Press, 2012. *eBook Academic Collection*,
<https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=e000xna&AN=480987&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Blanchard, Ray, et al. "A Method Yielding Comparable Estimates of the Fraternal Birth Order and Female Fecundity Effects in Male Homosexuality." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, vol. 287, no. 1923, Mar. 2020, pp. 1–9. *Academic Search Complete*,
<https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=142539864&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- CDC. *Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016
- Clair, Nick. "Chapter 835: 'Gay Conversion Therapy' Ban: Protecting Children or Infringing Rights?" *McGeorge Law Review*, vol. 44, no. 3, July 2013, pp. 550–558. *Academic Search Complete*,
<https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=89580949&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

- Doyle, Christopher J. "A New Family Systems Therapeutic Approach for Parents and Families of Sexual Minority Youth." *Issues in Law & Medicine*, vol. 33, no. 2, Fall 2018, pp. 223–234. *Academic Search Complete*,
<https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=132936654&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Graham, Tiffany C. "Conversion Therapy: A Brief Reflection on the History of the Practice and Contemporary Regulatory Efforts." *Creighton Law Review*, vol. 52, no. 4, Sept. 2019, pp. 419–425. *Academic Search Complete*,
<https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=140909254&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Homosexuality is Not a Mental Illness: American Psychiatric Association Reclassifies (1952, 1973)." *Opinions throughout History: Gender: Roles & Rights*, edited by Grey House Publishing, 1st edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*,
https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/greyothgrr/homosexuality_is_not_a_mental_illness_american_psychiatric_association_reclassifies_1952_1973/0?institutionId=3962
- Romero, Christopher. "Praying for Torture: Why the United Kingdom Should Ban Conversion Therapy." *George Washington International Law Review*, vol. 51, no. 1, Jan. 2019, pp. 201–230. *Academic Search Complete*,

<https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=137387890&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Ruby Brisco: “The War on Drugs is a War on People”

Ruby Brisco is a sophomore musical theatre major with a minor in dance. She's involved in the Performance Dance Team, Platinum Edition Show Choir, and the productions that the Theatre Department puts on. Her argumentative essay centers around the mass incarceration of people of color in America—a topic she has been passionate about since 2017. The essay was an opportunity for her to explore this intriguing topic, while also learning how to see the other side of an argument. She says that the hardest thing to do was argue for the other side of the conversation because she's so firmly rooted in her own opinion. One way that Brisco worked to prove her own stance on the argument was by finding effective, reputable sources. When asked what advice she has for writers struggling with finding sources, she says, "Don't just grab the first thing that you see as a source, definitely read it, like, multiple times and make sure that this one source that you have aligns with what you're trying to say and actually is the truth."

Ruby Brisco

Dr. Vickie Holtz

English 105, Section 3

11 October 2020

The War on Drugs is a War on People

The war on drugs, that started forty-eight years ago, is no longer relevant. In 1971, President Nixon of the United States launched America's War on Drugs, which has been the longest and most expensive "war." At that time, Nixon released a statement calling drug use "public enemy number one." The next year the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE) was created to attack people who choose to participate in recreational drug use but otherwise peaceful and upstanding citizens. Years later in 1994, John Ehrlichman, Nixon's counsel and Assistant for Domestic Affairs revealed that the reason for the start of this federal drug purge wasn't because of the drugs themselves, but to get the people most commonly using them incarcerated. Which at that time were heavily African American and people of the counter "anti-war" culture, or "hippies" who had different political views than Nixon as a way for them to not be eligible to vote against him. Since 1971, the United States has spent \$3.3 billion annually incarcerating the same demographic of people. That's about \$1 trillion total wasted on people who commit minor, non-violent, drug-related "crimes." The War on Drugs is a systematic and racist attempt for power and control for white people politically, socially, and economically and has led to more harm for the American people than good.

The war on drugs has had a very large impact on the American Criminal Justice System. During the 1980s, drug charges became the leading cause of both arrests and incarceration sometimes resulting in more severe punishments than violent or sex crimes. According to the US

National Library of Medicine, in the 1990s “White people composed 72% of all illicit drug users compared with the 15% of Black people. White people were nearly 5 times more likely than Black people to use marijuana and were 3 times more likely than Black people to have ever used crack. However, POC makes up 60% of the incarcerated population and a Black man is 13 times more likely to be charged with a drug-related crime than a White man despite being less likely to use.” The Justice system was created to remove a criminal from society, but in the case of most nonviolent drug charges, what it leaves behind is a weaker community. Children lose contact with parents and caregivers. It takes away people who could be contributing to the workforce and community. On the more political side, it leads to a “systematic disenfranchisement of the poor and of people of color” (Who’s Using and Who’s). People with felonies or jail time on their records lose the right to vote. After being released from jail people are more likely to struggle with mental illness, finding jobs, or drug and alcohol abuse. This impact is found more apparent in Black and Latino communities. “The unequal enforcement of the war on drugs serves to fuel our spiraling incarceration rates and the removal of men, women, and children from our communities” (Who’s Using and Who’s).

In 2018 alone, 600,000 people in the United States were charged with possession of marijuana. But at the same time in other parts of the country, the Cannabis Industry is booming and between “80% to 90% of the industry is run by white owners” (Yzola). In the 1880s marijuana was first used as medicine or for textiles and paper. The practice of actually smoking the plant was brought to America with Mexican immigrants seeking refuge. But during the Great Depression, the increase of unemployment led people to hate and fear the Mexican migrant workers connecting them to cannabis and violence and labeling them as criminals. We see this systematic racism and xenophobia still in the 21st century, like when current President Donald

Trump said “They are not our friend, believe me. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists,” referring to Hispanic refugees and workers. So, while POC are being shamed, arrested, and hated for having underground sales of marijuana, white people are turning it into a billion-dollar business and operating without any repercussions. To make matters worse, people that have served jail time for marijuana-related drug charges can’t sell it legally after being released making them shut out from a successful industry they created. Systematic racism is finally being put under the spotlight in America. If we dig into almost any American institution’s roots, we can find how they were created to benefit white conservatives or for control of POC and the “counterculture” of the time instead of to better our communities and country as a whole.

According to the Huffington Post in 2017, nobody has died from marijuana use. Ever. In fact, studies have shown that you would need to consume 20,000-40,000 times as much THC than is in a single blunt to be anywhere near death. Another study done in 2012 at the University of California, San Francisco discovered that even smoking a single joint every day for 20 years would be harmless. However, most participants involved in the study only smoked two or three joints each month, which is fairly common for most users. Mark Pletcher, an epidemiologist from the university, who led the study stated, “I was surprised we didn’t see effects [of marijuana use].” Other drugs including Heroin, Cocaine, LSD or Meth do have high death rates but when you look at the bigger picture, the uses of these drugs also usually only affect the user themselves, without, of course, thinking of anyone affected by a DUI related death. I propose that if we legalize some substances, like marijuana, that haven’t ever been seen as dangerous and people were able to use them legally and safely in the privacy of their own homes, there isn’t any problem with it especially when you remember that the reason it was illegal in the first place was

that the president was trying to silence the opposition. The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 17,358 individuals in custody died during the period from 2007-2010.

In 2018, Former Speaker of the House, John Boehner said “When you look at the number of people in our state and federal penitentiaries who are there for possession of small amounts of cannabis, you begin to scratch your head. We have literally filled up our jails with people who are nonviolent and frankly do not belong there.” If 600,00 people are arrested for marijuana possession every year, that means more than one marijuana possession arrest every minute. With this, and along with my above proposal, when we legalize recreational use of some drugs, we need to exonerate anyone incarcerated due to a non-violent drug-related crime. This means anyone who has been charged with use or possession of illegal substances that don’t have any other violent offenses. DUIs and other reckless behavior while under the influence of drugs that could’ve been or were harmful to other people would not be released any sooner than their original sentencing. This only applies to the large population of people who were peaceful and used the substance they were arrested for safely. Charges, releases, or legalizations for other, more deadly, or dangerous drugs are still up to debate in my eyes because they can potentially be harmful to not only the user but other citizens as well. However, one like marijuana, which has an outstanding death toll of 0, should be free.

The main concern with legalizing drugs is the side effects of the substances in question. Short term effects of Marijuana include altered senses, altered sense of time, changes in mood, impaired body movement, difficulty with thinking and problem-solving, and impaired memory. However, these typically only occur for a couple of hours at most and are usually unproblematic for the user. One possible long-term effect of the drug is that it can affect brain development. It is also seen that people who began using in their adolescent IQs were lowered by 8 points. The

relation all of these have with each other is that they all are things that only occur to and affect the user themselves. They also are nothing that would be catastrophic for adults using responsibly. These side effects closely relate to that of alcohol, a legal substance for adults to safely use from time to time. The only difference is alcohol has killed people. If marijuana was legal, there would be an age limit. I agree with the legal age of 21, as it is the same for alcohol and already the legal recreational age for marijuana in states that it is already legal in. Another argument against legalizing marijuana is that the taxes for things such as “increased emergency room visits, medical care, and addiction treatment for the uninsured,” and that the money being put into the economy from the industry doesn’t add up to these costs. One more is how marijuana use can lead to the use of more dangerous drugs (Who’s Using and Who’s). I have seen no counterargument that addresses the political and social aspects of this debate.

In conclusion, we should legalize the recreational use of marijuana in every state, but not before we release everyone currently incarcerated in America on a non-violent marijuana related charge. Not only should their charges be dropped but the people should be able to legally participate in and profit off the growing cannabis industry if they so choose. I urge that we remember that the original call for the war on drugs was due to a president fighting for power, only looking for reelection, and not thinking about what was in the best interest of the American people. If we can make these changes as a society, we are one step in the right direction of fixing a broken nation founded on systematic racism.

Works Cited

- Perry, Mark J. "The Shocking Story behind Richard Nixon's 'War on Drugs' That Targeted Blacks and Anti-War Activists." *AEIdeas*, 14 June 2018, www.aei.org/publication/the-shocking-and-sickening-story-behind-nixons-war-on-drugs-that-targeted-blacks-and-anti-war-activists/
- Richards, Sabrina. "Is Cannabis Really That Bad?" *The Scientist Magazine*, 23 Jan. 2013, www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/is-cannabis-really-that-bad-39894
- Williams, Timothy. "Marijuana Arrests Outnumber Those for Violent Crimes, Study Finds." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 12 Oct. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/10/13/us/marijuana-arrests.html
- Dickinson, Tim, and Ethan Nadelmann. "The War on Drugs." *Rolling Stone*, no. 1261, 2016, pp. 30-35, *Academic Search Complete*, <https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=115094550&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Greer, Christina. "Nixon and the War on Drugs." *New York Amsterdam News*, vol. 107, no. 15, 2016, pp. 14, *Academic Search Complete*, <https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cpid&custid=s6222504&db=a9h&AN=115393792&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- "Public Enemy Number One: Nixon's War on Drugs (1972)." *Opinions Throughout History: Drug use & Abuse*. Edited by Grey House Publishing, Grey House Publishing, Amenia, NY, USA, 2018, *Credo Reference*,

https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/greyothdua/public_enemy_number_one_nixon_s_war_on_drugs_1972/0.

"The Racial Dimension: Drugs and Mass Incarceration (1995)." *Opinions Throughout History:*

Drug use & Abuse. Edited by Grey House Publishing, Grey House Publishing, Amenia, NY, 2018, *Credo Reference*,

https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/greyothdua/the_racial_dimension_drugs_and_mass_incarceration_1995/0

Thirkill-Mackelprang, Ashley. "Drug Wars, 1950–present." *World History: A Comprehensive*

Reference Set. Edited by Facts on File, Facts On File, New York, NY, 2016, *Credo Reference*,

https://www2.viterbo.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/fofworld/drug_wars_1950_presen

Moore, Lisa D., and Amy Elkavich. "Who's Using and Who's Doing Time: Incarceration, the

War on Drugs, and Public Health." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 98, no. 5, May 2008, pp. 782–786, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2007.126284

"Recreational Marijuana ProCon.Org." *Procon.Org*, 2016, <https://marijuana.procon.org>

Reilly, Katie. "Here Are All the Times Donald Trump Insulted Mexico." *Time*, Time, 31 Aug.

2016, <https://time.com/4473972/donald-trump-mexico-meeting-insult/>

Yzola, Alana. "The Legal Cannabis Industry Is Exploding, but Overwhelmingly Run by White

Owners." *Insider*, 17 Apr. 2020, <https://www.insider.com/how-big-weed-became-rich-white-business-2019-12>

Literary Analysis

Assignment sheet provided by Dr. Jackie Herbers.

Process: Brainstorming, research, outline, conferences, rough draft, peer-review, final draft

Course Outcomes:

1. Invent, draft, revise, and edit effectively for various audiences and purposes.
2. Apply disciplinary conventions in writing and interpreting texts.
3. Support claims with credible, relevant, and appropriate sources.
4. Use textual evidence to demonstrate a convincing claim about meaning in literature.
5. Communicate using direct, error-free language.

Requirements:

1. 4-6 pages.
2. MLA format. This includes the heading, page numbers, one-inch margins, double-spacing, centered title, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, in-text citations and works cited page.
3. You must support your analysis of the literature with two additional credible sources.

Claim: Theme (topic+assertion)

Evidence: Literary elements/poetic devices and two credible/scholarly sources (**No web sites**)

Choice 1:

Choose two poems either from what we read in class or from *Backpack Literature*. Discuss one theme those two poems share and describe the way the literary elements the authors use help the reader clearly understand the theme.

Authors to Consider:

<u>African American</u>	<u>Latin-American</u>
Langston Hughes	Rhina P. Espaillat
Nikki Giovanni	Gina Valdes
Gwendolyn Brooks	Aaron Abeyta
Paul Laurence Dunbar	
<u>War</u>	<u>Native American</u>
Randall Jarrell	Sherman Alexie
Diane Thiel	
Wilfred Owen	

Choice 2:

Choose one short story we read in class or a story from the list below and discuss its theme. Describe the literary elements the author uses to help the reader fully understand this theme. Stories that do not appear in *Backpack Literature* can be found online.

<u>Immigration/Cultural Identity/Race</u>	<u>Gender</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A Pair of Tickets" by Amy Tan pg. 128 • "Two Kinds" by Amy Tan • "The House on Mango Street" by Sandra Cisneros pg. 190 • "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bamabara • "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker pg. 77 • "This is What it Means to Say Phoenix" by Sherman Alexie pg. 246 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman pg. 215 • "I Stand Here Ironing" by Tillie Olsen • "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber • "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid pg. 56 • "The Storm" by Kate Chopin pg. 104 • "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin pg. 179
<u>Mindless Suffering/Oppression</u>	<u>Poverty</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. Le Guin pg. 229 • "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson pg. 235 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara • "I Stand Here Ironing" by Tillie Olsen
<u>War</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Things They Carried" by Tim O'Brien pg. 321 	

Audience

Your audience for this paper should be your fellow college students. For this audience, you'll need to consider what its members already know and what they'll need to learn in order to better understand your analysis. Therefore, you will need to provide one paragraph of background information to address the needs of your particular audience. This background information will vary for each writer.

Register

You will work on your academic register in this paper, so please avoid using "I" statements, "you" statements, things, stuff, clichés, slang, and contractions (write out contractions).

Outline Template:

Introduction:

1. Attention grabber: Quote, fact, statistic, question, anecdote
2. Thesis statement=Author+Title+topic+assertion
3. List of paper's main points (literary elements)

Body:

1. Background information (1-2 paragraphs): Summary of story, overview of general topic, or other necessary information
 - a. Topic sentence
 - b. Support from sources
 - c. Conclusion sentence
2. Point one: first literary element
 - a. Examples from literary work (citation)
 - b. Examples or support from credible source (citation)
 - c. Assertion connecting this point back to the thesis statement
3. Transition, Point two: second literary element
 - a. Examples from work (citation)
 - b. Examples or support from sources (citation)
 - c. Assertion
4. Transition, Point three: third literary element
 - a. Examples from literary work (citation)
 - b. Examples or support from sources (citation)
 - c. Assertion
5. Transition, Point four: fourth literary element
 - a. Examples from literary work (citation)
 - b. Examples or support from sources (citation)
 - c. Assertion

Continue this pattern until you've covered all your points. You need at least four main points, but you may have more if you wish.

Conclusion:

1. Restate the thesis statement
2. Remind the reader of main points
3. Leave the reader with closing or final thoughts

Kylie Krahn: “The Threat of Aging in Everyday Use”

Kylie Krahn is a junior accounting and piano major at Viterbo University. She went to high school near Viroqua and enjoys spending time practicing piano when she can. Her essay “The Threat of Aging in Everyday Use” is a literary analysis of “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker. Krahn said she did not want to go a traditional route when writing her essay and explore a new interpretation of the work. She said looking back if she could change anything, she would research more about the other stories the author has written to gain a better understanding of her works and background in writing. Krahn said this essay helped her understand what college writing is supposed to be compared to high school writing. She also stated that she learned when writing she needed to look more in depth and expand her “pool of knowledge” about her topics.

Kylie Krahn

Dr. Jackie Herbers

English 105

20 February 2020

The Threat of Aging in Everyday Use

The existence of time will inevitably bring change that can be either welcomed or spurned, yet it is inevitable that change will occur regardless of any prevention. This principle consistently applies to the fictional world of Mama, Maggie, and Wangero. In “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker, the author articulates that everything must change over time which should be accepted while appreciating the past, rather than to resist change and lose the purpose of the past. By doing so, people can become liberated to move along in life rather than to stagnate on physical manifestations and memories. The use of the imagery of the home, symbolism of the quilts, tone and style of the narration, and the conflicting presence of the antagonist throughout the text support this point.

Alice Walker was born in 1944 as the eighth child in her family of sharecroppers in Easton, Georgia. As a proficient writer on feminism, battling racial stereotypes, and embracing individuality, Walker’s unique life story has proved to be an exquisite colorful palette that has inspired and made her countless titles so invigorating and sympathetic to its readers.

In “Everyday Use,” a mother and child, called Mama and Maggie, wait for the other daughter, Dee, to come home to their rural farm in 1970’s Georgia. Once Dee arrives, they are shocked to find she has attempted to completely align herself with her heritage by becoming a new person by the name of Wangero. The mother and daughter warily embrace the new daughter’s persona, but find difficulty in accepting her new values of preserving something’s

physical form to keep its history rather than to honor its traditional use. Wangero attempts to take meaningful quilts that were supposed to be inherited by Maggie to use as decorations to follow her preservation mindset while claiming she will be using the quilts by hanging them but is stopped by Mama who gives the quilts back to Maggie. Wangero leaves the house shortly after disheveled, disgruntled, and disgusted, and is displeased at the way Mama chooses to honor the past. This story is relatively short, but it serves its purpose of displaying the importance of accepting change with time rather than to prevent change and lose the importance of something.

* A lived-in home shows signs of wear and tear which reflects the habits and daily motions of its inhabitants and its previous generations. Mama's narrative does an impeccable service of conjuring vivid imagery for each setting point in the story, such as when she illustrated the butter churning handle Wangero insisted on taking to her home to appreciate as a decoration. "In fact, there were a lot of small sinks; you could see where thumbs and fingers had sunk into the wood. It was beautiful lighter yellow wood, from a tree that grew in the yard where Big Dee and Stash had lived" (Walker 82-83). This brilliant scene depicts the heavy, repetitive use the tool endured from the countless years of being used, while continuing to provide for Mama's family which was hinted when Mama said that in the butter churn "the milk in it (would be) clabber" (Walker 82) when it was addressed. "The surface sheen of a woman's pestle testifies to many years of usage... The manner of handling an object, it seems, forges a closer psychological bond between object and user" (Arnoldi 235). By Wangero taking away the handle to turn it into a decoration, hereby attempting to prevent time from changing it, the handle lost its purpose and lost its connection to Mama's family because Wangero became a separate entity from the family by proclaiming that "Dee is dead" (Walker 81). The handle kept its purpose and memories in it as long as it was in use by Mama's family. By attempting to preserve the past, hereby, preventing

more use of the handle over time, Wangero has made the handle into no more than an obscure object and it has lost its meaning. As a response to this change, Mama allows Wangero to obtain the handle and simply moved on in conversation rather than to worry about how she would be able to support her household's need of butter, or even confront Wangero about taking the handle. By moving on and not holding a grudge, Mama doesn't allow conflict to arise and continues to maintain peace within her household.

Just as the handle is a powerful physical item which holds memory for Wangero and Mama, other objects in the home can be regarded in the same way which can become more powerful with use. In particular, the quilts depicted in the story follow this trend and are symbolic of teaching. The quilts "had been pieced by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee and me had hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them... in both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform that he wore in the Civil War" (Walker 83). These quilts were planned to be inherited and to be used by Maggie, but Wangero said "Maggie would put them on the bed and in five years they'd be in rags" (Walker 83), even though the creators of the quilts intended for them to be used. The "Material Culture of Needling and Sewing describes that "...needlework can be interpreted along several lines of social and economic relevance: everyday, 'practical' or 'necessary' work (sewing, mending, and knitting); 'fancy work' (embroidered pictures, muslin or 'whitework,' cutwork, candle wicking, tambour work, stuffed work, canvas work)..." (Beaudry 5), which shows that the quilts are made for common use. In response to Wangero's argument, Mama protected Maggie's prospective use of the quilts until they were unusable. Mama had enhanced her quilting skills thanks to the creation of the quilts

with her family, and as would Maggie when the quilts are falling apart. “She can always make some more. Maggie knows how to quilt” (Walker 83). “It was Grandma Dee and big Dee who taught her how to quilt herself” (Walker 84). The quilts are symbolic of teaching, which would happen when Maggie would need new quilts. By Wangero attempting to take the quilts, hereby stopping the quilts from aging with use, she would take away Maggie’s chance to learn the unique quilting styles and skills passed down through her family.

Mama’s voice guides the reader through the text through her thoughts, perspectives, and values. Her narration is unwavering, simple, factual, and direct, which reflects Mama’s mindset in the story. The majority of statements Mama makes follow a pattern of making a statement, giving an answer, and then moving on, but she never questions why something is the way it is, such as when she said that “after second grade the school was closed down. Don’t ask me why: in 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now” (Walker 79). By having such a unique style of narration, it reflects Mama’s true personality toward how she processes time and keeps to a schedule. “I used to love to milk till I was hoofed in the side in ’49. Cows are soothing and slow and don’t bother you, unless you try to milk them the wrong way” (Walker 79). Mama’s narration style and speed shows she spends no time on focusing on the past by reflecting and revising, but only focuses on the present. By doing so, she has lived successfully and happily with Maggie without having to waste time worrying about unnecessary preventative measures to be taken, such as how Wangero wanted to preserve the quilts. Even when Dee changes to Wangero, Mama accepts her as Wangero immediately, and can change her perception of ‘Dee vs. Wangero’ as Wangero alternating being familiar and unfamiliar to Mama. “‘Well,’ I say. “Dee.” “No Mama,” she says. “Not ‘Dee,” Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo!” “What happened to ‘Dee’?” I wanted to know. “She’s dead,” Wangero said” (Walker 81). Mama knows she is in

control of how she interprets her life, and this mindset follows the concept of superior identity awareness which states, “the more I become aware of myself, the greater my internal psychic space, the freer I become in my dealings with the world” (Craib 171). Mama is content with everything in her life and portrays this through her easygoing narration style. She seems to accept various facts and things as they are without changing them, especially because Mama doesn’t believe they need to be changed. Mama is content with the way the things in her life are, and she doesn’t dwell on the fact that she could have fixed or improved things for the future.

Mama’s and Maggie’s world is preserved by accepting change and moving forward, while Wangero believes that to maintain her world she must keep things physically the same. Wangero, formerly known as Dee, is the antagonist of the story who disrupts the familiarity and calmness of the home where Mama and Maggie live by countering Mama’s mindset of passive preservation. “‘But they’re priceless!’ she was saying now furiously; for she has a temper. ‘Maggie would put them on the bed and in five years they’d be in rags. Less than that!’” (Walker 83), was Wangero’s argument concerning the use of the quilts that made both Mama and Maggie uncomfortable. Taking various items from the household which all hold some form of reminiscent value to Wangero and changing them into relic decorations is completely the opposite of what Mama and Maggie believe. Maggie’s way of remembering the past is being able to remember the past without any items with significant meaning, which she summarized when she announced, “I can ‘member Grandma Dee without the quilts” (Walker 84). Once Mama realizes Wangero’s true intentions and argumentative manner, she takes matters into her own hands and ends the argument by forcibly giving the quilts back to Maggie and lets Wangero leave. Wangero’s antagonistic role ultimately reflects that she simply wallows in the past and is explicitly resistant to change, so when Mama’s values adjusted to fit the scene to give the quilts

to Maggie, Wangero could not accept having the ability to actively preserve the physical form of the quilts and left.

“Everyday Use” proves that change is inevitable through time, and by attempting to preserve something, part of it can be lost in the process. The narrator’s account of the story reveals the absence of a conflict with time as the antagonist consistently quarrels with this concept. The quilts, household objects, and home are all to be used every day and are not to be simply gazed upon from afar. If something is still usable, it is better to use something for its intended use rather than to have it lose its original purpose in the process, such as with the quilts and butter churning handle. Wangero attempts to preserve every past part of her life that is still obtainable as a relic, yet this is futile because time must make things age, while Mama uses the past to protect her present. By attempting to keep something in time instead of continuing to use it, it can lose its purpose, meaning, and function. When this situation occurs, it is best to move on and accept change just as Mama has done in the story.

Works Cited

Arnoldi, Mary Jo, et al. "African Material Culture." Indiana University Press, 1996. pp. 235.

eBook. Bloomington : Indiana University Press. 1996

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=c37a1e08-6367-4b4d-bf36f23c981109f0%40sdcvssessmgr02&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLGNwaWQmY3VzdGlkPXM2MjIyNTA0JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=608&db=nlebk>

Beaudry, Mary Carolyn. "Findings : The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing." eBook.

New Haven :Yale University Press, 2006. pp. 5.

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=f3a5c69f-f09c4f2aba3c-23979d720cf3%40sdcvssessmgr01&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLGNwaWQmY3VzdGlkPXM2MjIyNTA0JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=192236&db=e000xna>.

Craib, Ian. "Experiencing Identity." SAGE Publications Ltd, 1998. pp. 171. eBook. London :

SAGE Publications Ltd. 1998

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=586b8ec0-b4dc-4b07-b2025b0bd0b80f5a%40pdcvssessmgr01&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLGNwaWQmY3VzdGlkPXM2MjIyNTA0JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=324163&db=e000xna>.

Walker, Alice. "Everyday Use." *Backpack Literature*, edited by X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia.

5th ed., Pearson. pp. 77 – 84.

Payton Harper: “Mental Illness and the Patriarchy of Marriage”

Payton Harper is a junior music theatre major with a minor in arts administration. She is a member of Platinum Edition show choir and has been in a number of theatre productions on campus. Harper is also the public relations officer for the Student Government Association and is the director of communications for the Student Theatre Project. In her essay, “Mental Illness and the Patriarchy of Marriage,” she addresses the topics of mental health and social roles through an analysis of “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Harper found learning about the struggle Women went through in the in the 19th and 20th centuries to be challenging. She had never put thought into the subject and felt blindsided by the information she was taking in. When asked what advice she had for future writers, Harper said, “To always be open when exploring new topics and to what others have to say about a story.”

Payton Harper

Herbers

English 105

21 February 2020

Mental Illness and the Patriarchy of Marriage

In 2020, mental illness is a tough subject to openly talk about for some people and is still something that not everyone believes exists. There has been a recent rise in cases and only in recent years has it become recognized and properly treated. In the 19th and 20th centuries, mental illness was something that was hidden from the outside world and not properly dealt with, especially if you were a woman. It was expected that a woman acted a certain way to uphold a good reputation for her family and her husband if she was married. In her novel, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman challenges what society has deemed the appropriate role a female has in a happy marriage and the appropriate response and cure to someone suffering with mental illness. She accomplishes this through symbolism, setting, point of view, and irony.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an active feminist who often wrote pieces on the inequality of males and females and the different gender specific roles they played in marriage. Gilman married an artist at the age of 24 and had a child within the year. She suffered from a nervous disease, what we would now call “postpartum depression.” Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, a renowned physician at this time, had a cure for such “nervous illnesses” called the “rest cure.” This treatment consisted of having the patients, mostly women, sleep for many hours of the day in hopes that the illness would go away. Gilman responded well to treatment at first, but when she was sent home and prescribed to keep sleeping, she slowly descended into insanity, much like Harper 2 the woman in her story *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Gilman "dedicated herself to feminism

and social reform” and believed “a purely domestic environment oppressed women” (Gagnon). While these themes are evident in this story, she also takes a stand against the rest cure and the mistreatment of women with mental illness in the mid-twentieth century.

The Yellow Wallpaper is a story about a woman suffering from mental illness. The woman’s husband, John, has just moved their family to this estate for the summer. John is a physician and demands she sleep in a room and stay there for long periods of time throughout the day to cure her nervous illness. Because she has no reason to doubt her husband, the woman obeys. There is a yellow wallpaper hung in the room that begins to interest the woman. The longer she is locked in this room, the more attention she pays to this dreadful wallpaper, and the farther away she slips from sanity. By the end of the story, she has a nervous breakdown, imagining a woman trapped behind the paper. This leads to her ripping off the paper and crawling about on the floor. When *The Yellow Wallpaper* was first published, it was received well as a horror story. Readers thought the woman was a ghost haunting the woman. It was not until years later that people realized this tale of a woman suffering from mental illness was a critique from Gilman of the rest cure.

Gilman first uses symbolism to define the confinement she feels in her marriage. In the story, the woman stays in a room that has a distinct, yellow wallpaper. The wallpaper is described as having a pattern that, “is torturing...It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you” (Gilman 223). Confinement is represented by the pattern on the wallpaper. Gilman often wrote about this feeling of imprisonment she felt most women related to when married in the mid-twentieth century. Deborah Madsen writes in *Feminist Theory and Literary Harper 3 Practice*, “Gilman’s stories expose the hidden structural or class determinants of feminine experience, especially the social and economic forces that constrain women to a sexual

class” (Madsen 79). As the story continues, the woman in the story starts to imagine a figure behind the wall with the yellow wallpaper. The narrator writes, “I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design” (220). At first, it is unclear what the figure is and whether or not she even sees anything at all. However, as the story continues, as she loses her sanity, it becomes clear the figure is a woman (224). She states, “The woman behind shakes [the pattern] ...and she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern--it strangles so” (226). This helps the reader understand the woman is trapped behind the wall, like she is trapped in this room because of her husband. It becomes clear she is the woman, and the pattern is repression. Specifically, the pattern is the role society has placed on her as a married woman. It is something holding her back and keeping her quiet as she struggles to fight against the social norm.

Setting is a powerful tool Gilman uses to emphasize the social status she holds as a married woman. At the estate where she resides, there is a garden. The garden is described as the only place she can be alone and not worry about being watched (221). The woman describes the garden outside her window and writes, “but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies” (219). John does not like for his wife to leave the room and experience true freedom. This is exactly what Gilman feels most women experience during marriage. In *Wild Unrest: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Making of ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’*, Helen L. Horowitz writes, “Charlotte’s essential conflict—living as a Harper 4 person of high ideals within a woman’s body and seeking its common joys at the cost of aspiration,” (76). The garden is an example of a place where the woman feels like she can

reach her full potential and be herself, but she is restricted to doing so by being forced to stay in this room.

Gilman uses point of view to give the reader an understanding of what is going on in the woman's head. This story is written as a series of journal entries the woman makes while staying in this house over the summer. These entries highlight her descent into madness. In one of her entries, the woman writes, "I don't know why I should write this. I don't want to. I don't feel able. But I must say what I feel and think in some way--it is such a relief!" (221). This is evidence that the woman is using these entries as the only way to let out her true feelings.

Deborah Madsen claims, "Only in her journal can she confess to the deceit and explain why it is necessary. In writing she can explain what she wants to tell her husband but cannot. The journal itself is her greatest deception but it also represents her most complete attempt at honesty" (81). Horowitz furthers this idea by writing, "What gives *The Yellow Wallpaper* its impelling force is the way the author places the narrator's voice within a world that denies her the ability to define herself and to live by her own lights" (177). If the story was told from a different point of view, there would be a drastically different story being told. For example, from John's point of view, it would be a story of an insubordinate wife who wants attention from her husband.

Lastly, Gilman uses examples of both verbal and dramatic irony to express this message. The most obvious example of irony happens early on in the story when she states, "John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage" (216). One should not expect that in marriage! Gilman knows that, of course, but she chooses to add this moment to emphasize the (Harper 5) role a woman must feel to be a socially acceptable wife. John keeps the woman in a room that is described as having a "heavy bedstead, barred windows, and then the gate at the head of the stairs" (218). The woman believes this room was once a nursery. This is an example of dramatic

irony. When the reader reads the description of where she is staying, they do not immediately recognize a nursery. Barred windows and nailed down beds are commonly found in rooms meant to house an insane person. It becomes obvious that she does not realize the severity of her situation. She even exclaims, “I am glad my case is not serious” (218). Madsen writes, “The gap between the physical details of her environment and her interpretation of them derives in large part from her desire to believe the things her husband tells her. What she reveals in this way is the extent to which she is trapped in a conception of herself derived from John and the values of the patriarchal society he represents,” (82). Gilman’s choice to use irony emphasizes the state the woman is in mentally and her willingness to obey her husband simply because of status.

The Yellow Wallpaper is perhaps one of Gilman’s most famous short stories. This is because of her ability and courage to address the taboo subjects of patriarchy in marriage and mental illness. She is able to find ways to highlight these societal issues in a compelling story of a struggling woman who is driven to a mental collapse. This is a story with a message that continues to be taught today, as these are subjects that today’s society is still afraid to address. Gilman often focused on the societal pressures women face, but the reader cannot ignore the pressures John feels as well. The stereotypical loving husband does not mean to hurt his wife, but longs to protect her by forcing her to conform. Gender roles follow us all and it up to individuals in society to change the narrative.

Works Cited

- Gagnon, Amy. "Charlotte Perkins Gilman." *Connecticut History*, 7 March 2016,
<https://connecticuthistory.org/charlotte-perkins-gilman/>
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper." Backpack Literature. edited by X.J. Kennedy and Dan Gioia. 5th ed., Pearson. pp. 216-229.
- Horowitz, Helen Lefkowitz. *Wild Unrest: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Making of "The Yellow Wall-Paper."* Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Madsen, Deborah L. *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. Pluto Press, 2000.

Gabrielle Cornell: “Lemonade and the Saxophone as Essential Plot Points”

Gabrielle Cornell is a sophomore nursing major who spends her time working at the library. Gabrielle's essay, "Lemonade and the Saxophone as Essential Plot Points," analyzes Beth Henley's play, *Crimes of the Heart*. Gabrielle was inspired to write this essay by the complex character of Babe, one of the play's main characters. She says, "I wanted my essay to give an explanation for her actions." Writing this essay was an opportunity for Cornell to explore the idea of "flow"--how a writer transitions from one topic to another--with a few rough drafts and peer reviews. She says that she learned to accept that her rough drafts weren't going to be perfect, and that she needed to continue working on them until she was happy. Her finished product is an essay that seamlessly integrates textual evidence with through literary analysis. When asked about her writing process in relation to sourcing quotes, Cornell said, "I usually find the quotes first, or have an idea, at least, of what quotes I want to use when I figure out what points I want to make." She did say, however, that it depends on the type of essay she's writing.

Gabrielle Cornell

Vickie Holtz

ENGL-105-3

8 Dec 2020

Lemonade and a Saxophone as Essential Plot Points

In the play *Crimes of the Heart* by Beth Henley, symbolism largely influences personalities and provides depth to the characters; and, if analyzed correctly, can deepen understanding of the play itself. Each character is connected to multiple items that work with their actions to create their personality, but Babe Magrath is the character whose depth can be the most fully understood through the use of symbolism. Analyzing the use of lemonade and the saxophone throughout the play allows Babe and her actions to be better understood, as well as expanding understanding of the entire play.

Throughout the play, Babe Magrath is repeatedly associated with lemonade in ways that explain why her actions in the play occurred. Since Babe's childhood, situations occurred in her life that were less than ideal; her father left, her mother committed suicide, and her grandfather did not know how to raise her or her sisters. In her adult life, things seemed to get better; she married the rich, handsome lawyer and lived happily ever after. Unfortunately, her happily ever after lasted only a short while before that lawyer started treating her badly and she shot him. This most recent situation in her life is the focus of the play, and her actions in response to this situation can be represented by the symbol of lemonade. Babe states in the play, "I like [my lemonade] with lots of sugar and lots of lemons," displaying her love for extremely sweet lemonade (Henley 30). Her love for sweet things translates into her life; when events in her life were sour, she figured out a way to sweeten them up. In this situation, the lemon was the fact that

Babe's husband was abusing her. Babe said, "I just started finding it impossible to laugh at his jokes the way I used to," and she admitted that her husband started hurting her as a result of her lack of affection (Henley 26). She turned away from her husband, the lemon, to a new man who treated her well because she "was just lonely!" (Henley 28). This man became the sweetness to the otherwise sour lemonade of her life. Babe took the horrible events in her life and added some good parts, and the combined sour and sweet aspects balanced out to make the lemonade of Babe's life, a delicious concoction of scandal. The result of her actions was an explosion of a new sour and sweet; Babe shot her husband in an attempt to rid him from her life to sweeten it, and she then had to live with the sour consequences of her actions. Understanding that Babe likes sweet lemonade deepens understanding of Babe's actions by providing a reason behind them.

A second symbol that deepens Babe's character is the saxophone that varies in use throughout the scenes of the play; this varying amount of use explains another aspect of the motives behind Babe's actions. Babe's life had always been fully planned out for her by her grandfather, who wanted her to live a happy life as the beautiful wife on the arm of a handsome man. Unfortunately, Babe was not welcomed or trusted by her in-laws, especially her sister-in-law, who hired a private investigator to spy on her. In addition, her marriage turned south, and she was abused by her husband. After Babe shot him, she bought a saxophone to learn how to play. She said, "I went out and bought that saxophone, just hoping I'd be able to attend music school and start up my own career" (Henley 29). Analysis of the reason behind her impromptu purchase of the saxophone and the amount of use it gets during each act helps explain Babe's actions throughout the play. In the first act, the saxophone is put away in a suitcase, getting no use. In the second act, it is put together, but still getting no use. Finally, in the third act, Babe plays the saxophone, although not very well. By purchasing the saxophone, it can be inferred that

Babe wanted something new in her life, and something she chose for herself. During the first act, she does not even take the saxophone out of its case, showcasing that she is still holding onto her past life. In the second act, she puts it together, which shows that she is slowly moving on. The fact that she plays the saxophone in the third act displays her will to move on and forget about her past, instead choosing her own future. This desire is also showcased in Babe's affair and the event in which she shot her husband; Babe decided she had had enough of listening to what her grandfather wanted and experimented with her life. Although it ended badly when she first changed her life around, when she went back to be with her sisters, she started making better decisions. She realized, "I'm not so all alone" and leaned on her sisters for support (Henley 62). Analyzing the saxophone can lead to the conclusion that although Babe originally had no idea what she was doing with her life, she eventually figured it out and found the people she was meant to be with.

Analyzing the use of the saxophone throughout the play lends an explanation for the motives behind Babe's actions and works with the analysis of lemonade throughout the story to provide a complete background for the events that transpire in the play. Understanding the motives behind Babe's actions allows readers to get a glimpse into the complicated life of Babe Magrath. Realizing that Babe's actions stem from a life of loneliness and abuse adds depth to Babe and a twist to the play. Babe's past, even back to her childhood, directly impacted the events of the play and created a scenario in which she finally snapped. The symbols of the saxophone and lemonade set the story up so that readers can fully understand Babe's motives by understanding her past and the way she deals with her problems.

Works Cited

Henley, Beth. *Crimes of the Heart*. Accessed 3 Nov 2020.