



# THE SCRIBLERIAN

Spring 2012 Edition

Sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the *Scriblerian* is a publication for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, this on-line journal is the result of an essay competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Spring 2012 Scriblerian Contest was planned and supervised by Chair Blake London with the help of Jacqui Harrah, Vanessa Hunt, Dana LeCheminant, Violet Wager, and Wes Van de Water. A total of 33 essays were submitted for the Spring 2012 contest.

## Contents

Argumentative 1010 .....	2
1st Place Winner: .....	2
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: .....	2
Expressive 1010 .....	8
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Winner: .....	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: .....	10
Argumentative 2010 .....	14
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Winner: .....	14
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: .....	18
Expressive 2010 .....	22
1 <sup>st</sup> Place Winner: .....	22
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: .....	23

## Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Karyn Vincent, "Savings Lives One Execution at a Time"  
For Professor Jessica Brown

On a day much like any other, I received a phone call that changed my life forever. My father's voice was distant and broken as he choked out the words that no father should ever have to say; my brother, his only son, had been murdered. I don't remember hanging up the phone, or even driving home; in fact, much of that day and the weeks that followed are still a blur. My brother Lee was just 27 years old when a group of five men broke into his house, tied him to a chair, and with their fists, bats, and whatever else lay at their disposal, proceeded to beat and stab him to death. The coroner's report concluded that despite the 27 stab wounds that were inflicted, the fatal blow was the concrete block they used to crush in his skull. I have only God to thank that Lee's three-year-old daughter was lucky enough not to be home that fateful night. Of the five men who were responsible for this brutal home invasion, four were sentenced to ten years and were paroled in eight. The man who was foremost responsible for planning the break in, and whose hands ultimately delivered my brother's death, was only given twenty-five years; he has only three years remaining, and will be released from prison before he is fifty years old. In retrospect, I question that if capital punishment had been a real threat in the minds of these men, would my brother still be alive today? And when the time comes that this man will be released, what will stop him from ever killing again?

It is disheartening to me that capital punishment continues to be one of the most controversial and divisive issues in America today. Supporters, like myself, understand that victims and their families deserve justice, that the death penalty can deter violent crime, and that only the death penalty can guarantee against repeat offenders. Oppositionists, however, persist in arguing that it violates the Eighth Amendment clause of the constitution, seeing it as a cruel and unusual punishment that in fact does not deter violent crime. Furthermore, because of social and economic class, as well as race, the system is far too biased and arbitrary to guarantee a fair outcome for the accused. Throughout this heated moral debate, I have often wondered of those who favor abolition, just how many of them have actually been victimized by violence? How many of them, in reality, have walked through the unrelenting hell of losing someone they love and have come through the other side still believing that the death penalty is cruel and unjust? Unfortunately, I know firsthand how it feels to have violence come knocking at your door and reshape your life around loss. Consequently, I am not so forgiving—nor should I be. This is why I must stand beside those who are in support of retaining and protecting capital punishment, and to those who oppose it, I say that to get rid of the death penalty altogether would not only dishonor the victim and their grief stricken families, but in short, it would be a betrayal of justice.

Recently, I ran across an article published in the New York Times; it was titled "An Indefensible Punishment." Within it, the author coldly stated that "The death penalty is grotesque and immoral and should be repealed." Statements such as these fill my heart with an overwhelming sense of sadness and frustration. There is a difference between the unlawful killing of an innocent human being, like my brother, and the execution of a convicted murderer. Since the dawn of time, people from around the world have sought justice through the use of the death penalty. Over the years, several gruesome techniques have been employed to deliver this retribution. From impaling, decapitation, and stoning, to

crucifixion, boiling alive, and being drawn and quartered; wherever criminals have existed, executioners have stood ready. Looking back over history, I'd say our nation's modern day death sentence is far removed from what the above article describes as "grotesque." Long gone are the days when public hangings and witch burnings were the norm. Now, as our nation continues to modernize, so do our methods of execution. From the development of the electric chair in 1888, to the gas chamber of 1924, Americans have been continuously seeking a more humane way to kill death row inmates. Today lethal injection provides a very quiet and private death, which is considered the most commonly practiced and humane technique. However, it needs to be remembered that it is the murder itself that is grotesque and not the punishment.

The guiding principle of our American Government has always been that the punishment must fit the crime. The United States Supreme Court has said that capital punishment is "an extreme sanction, suitable to the most extreme crimes" (Lowe 42). Is murder not considered to be an extreme crime? In Wesley Lowes' essay, he points out that "murder can't be taken seriously if the punishment is not equally as serious" (44). Furthermore, as Edward Koch once said, "It is by exacting the highest penalty for taking human life that we affirm the highest value of human life" (323). This argument may be considered standard by some, but it is ultimately irrefutable. Life is indeed a precious thing, a miracle beyond compare, and it would be immoral not to punish a killer to the fullest extent of the law. It never ceases to amaze me how so many people seem to care more for the individual with a blood stained conscience—their rights, their treatment, and their protection—rather than the victims butchered by their hands.

Troy Anthony Davis was one such killer, convicted of and sentenced to death for the shooting of off-duty police officer Mark MacPhail on August 19, 1989. Several eye witnesses placed Davis at the scene and identified him as the man who, in cold blood, stood over MacPhail and fired twice. In the twenty-two years between his conviction and execution, Davis maintained his innocence, insisting that although he was there, someone else pulled the trigger. After numerous appeals and granting Davis three different stay of executions, the Supreme Court, in effort to avoid a wrongful execution, ordered a federal court in Georgia to give Davis a new evidentiary hearing; at which point his case, yet again, collapsed. Chief Judge William T. Moore, an appointee of President Clinton, meticulously reviewed all of the evidence and described the defenses efforts to prove Davis's innocence as "largely smoke and mirrors" (Lane Washington Post). Judge Moore, despite public outcry, stood up for what he thought was right and ruled against Davis. The courts upheld their conviction, and on September 21st, 2011, Davis was executed.

The New York Times article, "An Indefensible Punishment," refers to this execution as "unconscionable," regardless that every effort was made and exhausted to prove Davis's innocence. It doesn't seem to matter to this outraged author that although Davis's story was repeatedly cross examined by both sides, it was so full of holes that a jury of his peers (seven black and five white) found him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. In fact, this particular case has become the fresh blood oppositionists are now using to fuel their arguments and drive forward their cause; the poster child, if you will, of why the death penalty is still racist and arbitrary. Some have even gone as far as to attack the character of the MacPhail family because of their vocal support of the death penalty. Many people believe that Georgia executed an innocent man that day, and think that because he was a poor black man from the south, he was treated unfairly. I, however, believe that the criminal justice system went the extra mile to ensure that the right man was punished for the crime and the reason Davis was unable to prove his innocence was because he, in truth, was guilty as charged. As for the MacPhail family, they are relieved of the heavy

burden they have had to carry all these years. They are finally at peace, not because Davis's execution was a joyful event, but in knowing that at long last the justice they had been waiting for was served.

Although some discrimination still exists, it is not near the issue it has been in the past. Patrick A. Lanagen, senior statistician at the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics concluded that there was no evidence "that in the places where blacks in the U.S. have most of their contacts with the judicial system, that the system treats them more harshly than whites" (Lowe 27). Also, consider this perspective from Ernest Van Den Haag, a professor of jurisprudence and public policy at Fordham University; he writes:

Discrimination must be abolished by abolishing discrimination—not by abolishing penalties. However, even if...this cannot be done, I do not see any good reason to let any guilty murderer escape his penalty. It does happen in the administration of criminal justice that one person gets away with murder and another is executed. Yet the fact that one gets away with it is no reason to let another one escape. (422)

It is easy to see discrimination, even where it doesn't exist, when the outcome of a trial, like the case of Troy Davis, is not what we expect. Still, the essential truth remains: murder is murder, it isn't rich vs. poor, or black vs. white; it has no class or color, and when a verdict is reached, it is made based on the facts of the case, not the murderers race. As Edward Koch once stated, "Justice requires that the law be applied equally to all" (323).

In keeping up with our article from the New York Times, the author goes on to attack the lawyers who represent capital cases, referring to them as "poorly suited for the job" and "egregiously incompetent" (Indefensible Punishment). The author also slams the jurors of capital punishment cases, insinuating that they are unable to come to any honest and fair decisions regarding sentencing because they must "consider circumstances" and "weigh competing factors" which leaves them "vulnerable to their biases (I.P.). As a result the article claims "they have made discrimination and arbitration the hallmarks of the death penalty" (I.P.). This implies that all jurors, regardless of the meticulous jury selection process, are all a bunch of racists. If jurors can't be trusted to make judgments on capital cases, what about non-capital cases? Or any case at all for that matter. I have serious problems with what such statements suggest.

We as human beings are not infallible; we make mistakes, this is without question. Our country's government, its systems, and its proceedings are all managed by people; therefore, errors will indeed take place. However, like Koch points out "If government functioned only when the possibility of error didn't exist, government wouldn't function at all" (322). Capital punishment may not be a perfect system but it shouldn't be repealed, rather it should be reformed.

One such reformation could be the hit and miss approach within the death penalty. This is the one point where oppositionists and I agree; it is arbitrary. Not only does every state has different laws concerning capital punishment, but the inconsistency of its use makes it far too random for it to be considered a real threat among criminals. Most convicted murderers will never be executed due to the lengthy appeals process, which ranges anywhere between 12 to 25 years. Convicts are more likely to die in prison rather than be executed. However there is a simple solution, as Wesley Lowe writes "For capital punishment to be applied equally to every criminal...it must be mandatory for ALL capital cases" (28). Appeals shouldn't take more than 2 years from start to finish and only one appeal should be allowed. It

should also be the killer's right to waive the appeals process if he or she so chooses. Not only will this strengthen the deterrent effects of capital punishment, but it will take discrimination out of the equation all together. More importantly though, this reformation of capital punishment will guarantee that no killer will ever have the opportunity to kill again.

As a mother of three young boys, I can only begin to imagine the anguish that my father had to endure identifying the mangled body of his own son. It is an exquisite agony that no parent should ever go through, yet every day someone will receive that dreaded phone call that will inevitably change their life forever. Sadly, murder is an everyday reality, but if capital punishment could prevent even one person from experiencing that horror, then I say that the death penalty is in every way absolutely defensible.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Ji Hae Kim, "Delicate Social Fabric"  
For Professor Charles Cuthbertson

It is evident that schools in the 21st century have student populations from a wide range of ethnicities. The surge in the number of students going abroad to pursue their college education is primarily due to increased global mobility. Just like other colleges, Southern Utah University (SUU) has also succeeded in attracting many of these foreign students to participate in its SUU culture and the American education. Despite the school's willingness to increase its foreign students intake, many of these individuals have yet to assimilate into the SUU environment. It is crucial that one should not ignore the distinct segregations of race groups in the school. As such, SUU should carry an active role in helping these students to allow a smooth transition into the culture. This would in turn strengthen the SUU spirit and also create a harmonious community.

There is a common saying, "Birds of a feather flock together." Many American students would agree with this. Some even have the impression that foreign students are unwilling to socialize. Although this may reflect the attitudes of some, the majority of these foreign students are eager to experience a genuine American education. It is the language and the cultural barriers which make it difficult for foreign students to intermingle, creating a misconception that these individuals are apathetic with the college life.

Before going into details on how SUU should help the assimilation of these foreign students, one has to deal with the misconceptions many have about these students. For many of these individuals, coming to America to pursue their college education is a big deal. This is because studying abroad is seen to be a rare opportunity where they come from. Also, the common perception that the American education is much more prestigious makes it even more important. As such, many of these foreign students are eager to learn English and experience the full college life. However, the inability to communicate well and the differences in cultural interaction make it hard for these students to identify with the Utah culture.

For many, college life is a new experience, especially when they are immersed into an unfamiliar environment as they pursue their college education abroad. With this foreign setting, many colleges around the world aim to aid in easing the transition through school events such as orientation. Orientation usually serves as a platform for individuals, especially for foreign students, to socialize and also as a means partake in the creation of school spirit. However, SUU does not execute the assimilation very well. During the SUU orientation, I was instructed to go through the program and move around with my Korean peers. The initial grouping of Koreans during the orientation made it hard for me to socialize with my American peers; as by the end of the orientation, many individuals had already formed cliques while the foreign students had yet to intermingle with them.

In my home country, Singapore, colleges have an extensive orientation period. Students are expected to attend the school orientation as well as the orientation planned by their major of choice. The concept of these orientations tends to focus on teamwork and leadership. The orientation planning team divides the student population into small groups with the foreign student population divided equally into these subgroups. With the formation of groups, these foreign students are in a situation where they naturally interact with their fellow peers and intermingle with them. Furthermore, with the orientation largely

focusing on team activity, these foreign students are able to build team relationship with their other group members and identify with them. SUU would do well to adopt this orientation style to help foreign students naturally mix with their American peers.

It is commonly understood that with the increase in foreigners settling in a country, there is an increase in the monetary inflow. This concept is similar to when there is an increase in foreign students. With more foreign students willing to study abroad, it brings in more income for the colleges of their choice. As a result, many colleges are competitive when it comes to attracting these consumers. One way these colleges can compete is to be well-known for their multi-racial population where acceptance and toleration is their main objective. This is crucial for international students as the fear of not being accepted is largely ingrained in their worries. In SUU's case, there is a long history of the inflow of international students. With the small international population, SUU is not yet seen as attractive compared to other colleges where a multi-racial population is distinct.

Although it is understood, SUU should have a clearer goal in assimilating the foreign students and aiming to increase their international student population. By doing so, it would act as a reassurance to the international students, removing any fear of not being accepted. One way SUU can do this is by pushing for a multi-racial population. By claiming and putting more emphasis on the international population, these students will feel more accepted by the school. Opponents may argue that the existence of the Multi-Cultural Club is enough to service these international students, but this is inadequate. If the school was to place much more emphasis and importance on the existence of the Multi-Cultural Club and its programs, it might inject the idea that a pluralistic population is important. This will create a natural psychological need and want to interact with the international student population and to learn about their cultures. By doing so, students will be more comfortable and less shy about intermingling with their American peers. This would also be beneficial to the school, as it might attract more foreign students, increasing the possible inflow of income.

Encouraging a closer-knit student population, regardless of their race, is important, as it would strengthen the school spirit and culture. Many a times, we see top colleges with strong school spirits due to their strong student network. I would like to put forth a proposal for SUU to work on assimilating the foreign students to strengthen the school's national standards.



## Expressive- English 1010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Kandra Carroll, "What Makes a Successful Person?"

For Dr. Julie Simon

Most people generally believe that someone who is "successful" is either rich, famous, or a stand-out in their field. I think it depends on what one's idea of success is. There are many people the world calls successful that I do not consider much of a success at all. I do not think it takes money, athletic ability, or achievements to become successful. I believe that successful people are those who make a difference in the life of another by simply choosing to be good at whatever it is that they do.

When I was younger I thought that to be a success I had to excel at something. Not that I do not admire those that were straight A students, the jocks, or those that were gifted in music, art or drama, but does one have to be in those groups to be considered a success? Though I worked hard in school and did my best, I never got straight As. I had some talent in art and music, but was really just average. The only thing I did excel at was track. I was excited to be the only girl in my high school to go to state in the 400-yard dash. However, when I got to the state championships, there were girls that were faster than me, and I didn't win. In fact, I didn't even place. After high school, I went to college for three years, but never finished my degree. I ended up getting married, and my husband and I started our family. Some people might say that I never really achieved any great success in my life, but I would beg to differ. I believe that what I have done with my life could possibly be greater than most of those "successful" people can ever say they have done.

I have been married to the same man for over twenty-eight years. I have raised four great children who are happy, independent, caring, and productive individuals, and I am very proud of them. I have kissed boo-boos, helped with homework, volunteered in the PTA, helped sell Brownie cookies, made my children practice instruments, and helped my son get his Eagle. I have gone to numberless soccer, basketball, volleyball, and football games to cheer my children on (or simply watch them pick flowers in the field). I have also listened to numerous piano, band, orchestra and choir concerts.

For the past ten years I worked with two severely handicapped little girls who needed extra love, patience and attention to progress, and I feel that I was good at my job. Those little girls learned and accomplished things that no one ever thought they could. My desire for being a kind person, a good neighbor, and for serving in my community has blessed me more than I could have ever benefited anyone else. I have found that there is no greater feeling than knowing that you might have changed another person's life for the better, whether it was something small or rather significant.

Through the years I have learned that to be truly happy and successful yourself, you need to learn to make others happy and successful. "Do unto others..." is not obsolete or an old fashioned cliché, but is still one of the most simple and yet profound rules to success. I have been taught this all of my life, but this lesson stood out most while watching some 7th and 8th grade Junior Jazz basketball games.

My husband had volunteered to coach my son's 7th grade Parks and Recreation team. When he signed up, he was told that every boy should have equal playing time, since these boys were there to learn the game and have fun, not to become professional athletes. Some of the boys on the team had never played before or were not as gifted athletically as others; however, since the parents had all paid the

same amount to watch their boys play and all of the boys came to practice, he felt that being fair was the right thing to do, no matter what.

Being fair may sound like an easy thing to do, but when it comes to game time, it's not that simple. Unfortunately, there were times during some of the games that I questioned my husband's decision to stick by the rules. Should he substitute a boy in or out so that they could win the game? In the end, he proved to me that it pays to do the right thing. The boys may not have won the A division championship that year, but they did win the B division (a lower level championship). It didn't matter to the boys whether they won the A or B division; they had a great time and ended the season feeling like champs. My husband felt great about what he did for the boys, and in return those boys loved my husband because he was fair and made playing basketball fun.

The following year my husband got another group of boys to coach. Just like the year before, there were some good, some average, and some not so good athletes, but my husband's decision to follow the rules stayed the same. They ended up at the final game undefeated, and the team they were playing for the championship was just as good. It was going to be a very competitive game, and I wondered if my husband might waver a little on the rules, just this once. I watched the other coach play his best players the whole game without subbing, while my husband played his team fairly. The head of the Junior Jazz department actually told him that since the other coach wasn't subbing in, he could do the same if he wanted to. Although it may have been a temptation, my husband had made a decision to do the right thing, and in the end he stood by his rule and it paid off. That group of ragtag boys ended up winning the A division championship.

Whether it was living by the golden rule, Karma, or just plain magic, I learned a powerful lesson that year. Those boys were all just your average 7th and 8th grade basketball players; there weren't any real superstars, but with a coach that believed in them as individuals and as a team, they learned to believe in themselves, which gave them the edge. That was the magic that made them great, and my husband proved that treating others fairly and doing the right thing does make a difference. He taught those boys lessons that they can take with them for the rest of their lives. They learned that by working hard, playing fair, and never giving up on themselves or their team, they could do anything. To this day my husband thinks back in fondness of those years as basketball coach, not just because they won the A and B division championships, but because he knows he did it right and made a difference in the lives of a few boys.

To make others happy, to make a difference in the life of another, to help someone else succeed, that is someone who is a true success. The rich can have their money, sports stars can have their trophies, and Hollywood can have their awards, but I wouldn't trade the times I have spent at my children's games or concerts, watching my husband coach, helping those little girls learn and develop, or volunteering in my community for all the "success" in the world. The older I have gotten, the more I realize that success is not so much in what I have achieved in life, but in who I am becoming and how much I have helped others along the way. The world may not think I have ever done anything worthy of "success," but I consider myself to be a very successful person.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Johna Andreason, "Happily Ever After"  
For Dr. Julie Simon

As a young girl growing up, I used to think that success meant finding Prince Charming, getting married, having a family, and simply living happily ever after. My ideas and dreams of a career, education, and even spirituality fell behind a fairytale illusion. I was married one year after high school and became the mother of three beautiful daughters. My husband had a good job and I was able to stay home with my children. My life was content, and for a while I had an overall feeling of fulfillment. My career was family, education was all around me, and God had given me the opportunity to raise three angels. It wasn't until after I became a divorced single mother of three children that I realized I needed to reevaluate my idea of success.

I began my divorce with a positive attitude and was ready to work hard at being a single mother, but not prepared to listen to my inner-self. I thought I had a strong sense of will power and faith in myself to do what it took to be a successful single mom. I soon discovered how easily stress and negativity could take that away from me. I did well at being a single, working parent until I started letting the negativity of others affect me so greatly that I began to give up. I was criticized and accused of behaviors that were untrue. It seemed the people that knew me best, in fact didn't know me at all, and had little faith in me. Instead of proving to them otherwise, I let this get me down. I started losing hope and doing nothing to fix it. I began adding to their negativity with my own negativity and what were once lies slowly began to become the truth. What started out to be positive determination was slowly turning into a pressure cooker about to explode. My life spiraled downward. I started to run away from the pain and pressure by making bad choices and justifying them. Unaware of my own denial at the time, I thought the justifications to be real and right.

I hit the bottom of darkness after finding myself in a dangerous relationship with a dangerous man which led to a dangerous drug addiction. This time of my life was the worst I have experienced. It felt like being tangled up in a cursed web of darkness. I thought I was stuck with no way out. I was scared of this man and let fear take over and gave him even more power. I was already emotionally unhealthy when he came into my life and it just got worse from there. I was being verbally, emotionally, and physically abused. Eventually, I believed his negativity towards me and agreed with him. I was nothing, I meant nothing, my children were better off without me, and he was justified if he felt as though he wanted to kill me. I blamed myself for everything. The disappointment in myself was almost unbearable. I was once a good mother with a positive outlook in life and a strong backbone, and now I was a battered, beaten down "nothing" who was a drug addict. I let my children stay with my family. I knew I was in no state of mind to be around them. This killed me inside. Yet I was the one keeping it that way and I couldn't find a way to change that. I needed help.

One miraculous day, after being in this nightmare of a relationship for ten months, I finally had the strength to end it. After tolerating this pain, abuse, fear, and manipulation for far too long, I took a stand. I needed to get out, stay out, and get my life back in order. Though weary and uneasy, I was able to follow through this time and get a restraining order. By the grace of God, I was kept safe while doing so. I believe God had heard my prayers and the gospel songs I would sing when I would be so afraid. He took over and gave me the strength I needed.

The relationship was over but the drug addiction remained with the haunting memories of the abuse that left a huge hole in my soul. I tortured myself. I hated myself for the mother that I had let myself become. I kept trying on my own to get sober and do things right. I kept failing, so I would try again and find myself returning to my addiction. However, God had granted me a little faith in myself. I knew what I wanted on the inside; I just couldn't match that on the outside. I started to pray more and put a little more faith in myself and others. I was once what I viewed as strong and I knew I could be again. I had been using for about a year and a half when I started to see the light.

With a heart full of faith and the willingness to change, I started attending an intensive outpatient treatment program in which I was fully committed to my recovery. I attended this program eagerly and gave all the effort I had to retain the information and put it to use in my life, as I knew this battle would be the most difficult one I had ever fought. Discovering I could not go on this journey alone, I shared my struggles with others in this group and learned from their experiences as well. Still committed to recovery, I am doing my best to maintain it. I let my Savior back in my life with a more faithful welcome than I ever had before. I am alive, sober, and safe. By remembering to remain courageous and determined to persevere, I am continuously making progress every day. This is more than enough confirmation that my Heavenly Father is there for me and was carrying me, watching over me, and guiding me; all I had to do is let him. The results from doing this have been outstanding. It saved my life. Instead of seeing myself as a failure I now know without a doubt that I am no failure at all. I was given an incredible opportunity to grow, to learn from my mistakes, and to reconnect with my spirituality. Through what I thought was failure I have been given strength, ability, peace, and love.

I now have a new vision of success. By persevering and maintaining a feeling of inner-peace within myself, I feel that I am being successful on all levels. Being committed to noticing my thoughts and behavior and striving for what I believe to be right and good helps me maintain this. The strong faith I have developed carries me through the hard times of doubt and struggle. I have found the person I used to be long ago before I stuffed my dreams under my once fantasized fairytale idea. The reconnection and my spirituality have formed me into a whole new person that I am proud to be. I am striving for progress to keep becoming closer and closer to who I want to be and know that I can achieve this as long as I believe in myself and let God be my guide.

I am now a full time college student, a dream that I thought had long passed; I had waved good bye to that sailing ship. The amount of gratitude I feel each day when my children and I are all getting ready for school together each morning floods my heart with joy. A world of opportunity has been opened to me. How blessed I am to have come out of the sad, dark, lonely world and to be living the dream that I am today. I enjoy my children more than ever before. I play with them, talk with them, connect with them, try to be an example and be their friend. I am able to take my children to church and teach them of Christ. These are all dreams come true. I still have struggles and make mistakes, but I know that if I stay on this path that I will continue to progress and grow beyond. I refuse to let my past drag me down. I'm grateful for my past mistakes and trials because without them, I would not have the perspective that I now have. The contentment within myself far precedes that of the past. The ability to show on the outside the person that I am on the inside has brought me great joy. By knowing myself, where I stand, what I believe, keeping faith, and loving myself and others to the fullest, I can make it through life's trials. I believe that is my true success. I believe this is how I can live happily ever after.

Honorable Mention: Jennifer Lupke, "The Trouble with English"  
For Professor Joy Sterrantino

I begin tapping my pencil impatiently. I continue until the tap, tap, tap becomes so obnoxious that I can't stand it. I look at the clock. It's only been one minute since the last time I checked it. I can't quite figure out why I am not filling up pages full of thoughts. I have so much to say and no way to get it out. My deadline is getting nearer. I am becoming more and more frustrated. "Why can't I get this assignment done?" I ask myself repetitively. I'm almost ready to surrender. So I decide to take a break. I tip back in my chair as far as I can, barely keeping it from crashing to the floor, which I am almost parallel with now. I lean my head back and begin staring at the ceiling until my daze becomes blurry. Then I start to daydream about why writing is so difficult for me.

I have been a student for quite some time now. I have had some hard classes and some easy classes. I think back to the previous semesters of English I have taken. None of them were more difficult than English 1010, which I have taken several times without getting a satisfactory grade—not even English 2010, which I thought was supposed to be even more dreadfully difficult. Actually, I really enjoyed English 2010. It changed my writing so much I decided to take English 1010 again. I was willing to head back into the belly of the beast and face my fears head on.

The professor was an unintimidating, soft-featured, small-statured Japanese woman. Existentialism was the topic. "How am I ever going to pull this off?" I thought. I didn't even know what existentialism was. After the first day of class was over, I hesitated to get out of my chair. It was as if I was frozen. I waited until the majority of the other students nonchalantly left the room. Then I hastily ran up to the professor. My heart was pounding. I could hear it loud in my ears. There she was, calmly placing her books in her bag.

"Professor," I squeaked out. I cleared my throat and began again. My mouth was now as dry as the Sahara Desert. "Professor." I got her attention this time.

"Oh hi," she said in an almost pastel voice.

I blurted out my confession as quickly as I could. "I suck at English. I always have."

She appeared shocked by how bold my statement was. Her reply was short and simple "I'm here to teach you." Her words instantly comforted me.

"So you think I can do okay in this class?" I had to reiterate. Frankly, I just wanted to know if I even had a chance at passing.

"Yes, of course. We will have a lot of hard material to cover, but if we take it one step at a time, we will get through it."

I was grateful because I had been dying to hear those words in relation to English for more than ten years. Well, ever since I was told I couldn't succeed in writing because I struggled with spelling. My insecurities all seem petty now.

I remember the incident now more clearly than ever. I can almost hear the tiles clanking together, mocking me. Since we left the store, I had been longing to play. The whole car ride home, I was antsy with excitement. We unwrapped the red rectangular box. I laid out the board and gave everyone a trough to put their tiles in. We were finally ready to play scrabble. It was a blast. We were laughing and enjoying ourselves, coming up with different words to put down., each of us trying to come up with a

better word than the previous player. I was younger than my newly inherited step brothers. Nonetheless, I gave it my all. I was ecstatic when I came up with a really terrific word. I began bragging about how awesome I was. I boastfully put each tile into place, covering up a triple word space. I then started adding up all of my points. Then I was interrupted by laughter. Apparently, I had spelled the word completely wrong. I was mortified. They were relentlessly taunting me. They told me how stupid I was and how I would never be able to write. Now I understand that they were just boys being boys.

Regardless of them just being boys, this paralyzed my interest in literature. I didn't enjoy reading anymore and was embarrassed by my writing. From this point on, I refused to participate in any sort of writing activities. Because of my adamant behavior, I did poorly in high school. This only reinforced my feeling of stupidity. Then, when I started college, I struggled through all of my writing assignments. At one point, I even considered dropping out of college because writing was too hard. Then I met Nozomi Irei. She is the woman I described earlier. She changed my outlook on literacy. She helped me realize that all I need to do is put something down on the paper. From there, I can edit the paper to perfection.

This woke me from my stupor. I picked up my pencil, and began scribbling down everything that I wanted to write about. This continued for the next hour or so. Every time I got distracted, I just remembered what Dr. Irei told me: "Just put something down on the paper, anything." Once I was done with my word binge, I created an outline for my essay—another thing she taught me. Then I started putting my words into sentences and paragraphs, and eventually my entire essay was written. After that, I went back and did some editing. I did my final proofread, getting rid of any spelling errors, grammatical issues, and punctuation problems. Lastly, I came up with my title. I had finally written an essay that I was satisfied with. I wanted to thank her right then and there. I had overcome my fears, and put myself out there. I used to be worried about what grade I would receive. Now I don't let other people's opinions of my writing affect my ability. I know that I am capable of being a good writer, and that spelling and grammar are just bumps in the road. That is why I have decided to retake English 1010. I now know that I do not need to settle for the poor grade I had previously received. I have proved to myself that I can overcome struggles with literacy. I am aware that with each progression in literacy, I will be faced with new challenges. I plan to take them on one by one. I won't let anything stand in the way of my success ever again.

## Argumentative- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Eric Liebhardt, "Hawaii's Journey to Prison: A Brief History of Paradisiacal Sovereignty Ended"

For Professor Toa Tawa

Today, Hawaii is known as the Aloha State—a name that connotes a feeling of welcome and hospitality. Before Hawaii was known as the Aloha State, it wasn't even a state at all. It was a territory of the United States of America. As we go back and examine the historical events and facts that predate the annexation of Hawaii to the United States, we find a slew of little-known episodes that are full of intrigue, conspiracy, and injustice. The motives behind these events are primarily commercial in nature, meaning there was revenue to be made and that revenue needed to be protected. In the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean, there were only few arsenals of resources at one's disposal to proliferate the produced goods and to protect said goods from potentially jeopardous hazards. Ralph Kuykendall points out in his history entitled *Hawaiian Kingdom* that one of these arsenals was Pearl Harbor located on the island of Oahu (18-19). Named for the replete amount of pearl bearing oysters, Pearl Harbor was a pearl of much worth to the United States capitalists who sought fortune in Hawaii. David Kalakaua, the ruling sovereign of the Hawaiian Kingdom during the late nineteenth century, found himself in a difficult position—should he cede Pearl Harbor to the Americans, or should he remain true to his people and not relinquish the Harbor? Kalakaua recognized the important contributions the Americans made to the economy and to the culture, yet he also had a duty to fulfill to help his own people, who were natives like him, because of his traditional values. Lucrative business deals, unrighteous dominion, and a drive for success are but a few components that led to the annexation of Hawaii to the United States.

To really understand the many layers that constitute the brief period of annexation, one must gain a better understanding of the socioeconomic makeup of the pre-annexed Hawaiian Islands. Using her uniquely witty writing style, Sarah Vowell provides understanding of the Hawaiian people in her book *Unfamiliar Fishes*. She says Native Hawaiians believe that they are "stewards, keeping watch in a reciprocal family arrangement. The land takes care of them and they take care of the land." This philosophy makes no one owner of the land; the people are simply stewards who take care of it. Although all are stewards, not all are equal (49). There is definitely a caste system with a hierarchy rooted in thousand-plus year old tradition. Haunani-Kay Trask elaborates on this layer of great importance in her masterpiece *From a Native Daughter*. Chiefs made sure their constituents had the necessities of life, and because of this concern for their welfare, the common people gave tribute to their chiefs. However, the people were not sworn to stay, but were free to roam about because there was no formal tie to a specific place. They belonged to the land and the land belonged to them (5). The Hawaiian archipelago was united under the bloody conquest of the Great Kamehameha I. Traditions were done away with, kapu were broken, and paramount to the subject of annexation, well-meaning Protestant missionaries arrived to "save" the Hawaiian Natives from an eternity of Hell Fire (Vowell 70).

Arriving in the 1820's, the Protestant missionaries had a profound impact on the Natives, primarily in their education, both religious and secular. They teamed up with the Natives to form a Roman-based alphabet so that they could read the bible. The missionaries taught reading, writing, and the arts. The high-ranking officials endorsed the teachings and Christianity and literacy rates soared. The benefits of

reading and writing affected the system of government when the monarchy began drafting versions of a constitution so that the Kingdom could enjoy being governed by a constitutional monarchy with a legislature and give power to the people. The constitution and new form of government was ratified in 1840 (Vowell 101, 155).

By the early 1860's, the missions sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) closed, and the remaining missionaries who chose to stay in Hawaii were encouraged to find employment and subject themselves to the Kingdom. Many of the former missionaries procured land from the Kingdom and got into the business of agriculture, specifically sugar cane (Vowell 169).

As time progressed, many of the beloved taro fields became sugar cane fields. During the US Civil War, the Union States didn't have access to sugar grown in the South and were very reliant on sugar imports from Hawaii. Ronald Takaki, in his book *Pau Hana*, shows that it was during this relatively brief period of time that the plantation owners saw the great monetary gain ahead of them if they played their cards right. William Hooper, owner of Hawaii's first sugar plantation since 1835, saw his production almost doubled during the Civil War years. The Civil War, however, was only one factor that played a role in the vicious cycle of greed and selfish capitalism (18-19).

One very important factor that contributed greatly to the annexation of Hawaii was a treaty of reciprocity which had been in the works for decades. Hawaii wanted to import sugar to the mainland free of tariff or tax. Many plantation owners knew that the reciprocity treaty was vital to their industry, and unless it was signed into action, the booming economy of the Kingdom of Hawaii would be in trouble. The owners knew that the reciprocity treaty would also come at a price for Hawaii, most likely to allow exclusive rights to the use of Pearl Harbor for the use of a shipping and fueling station. However, the Natives knew this too and would not allow a portion of their ancestral land to be ceded to the United States. At the end of 1874, King David Kalakaua traveled to Washington D.C. where he was greeted by President Ulysses S. Grant. In Kristin Zambucka's book about King Kalakaua entitled *Kalakaua, Hawaii's Last King*, we learn the outcome of this visit to Washington D.C.. It only took a few months for congress to ratify the reciprocity treaty and by March of 1875, the reciprocity treaty was voted into action by the senate and no land was ceded to the Union (24).

This initial reciprocity treaty was the foot in the door that annexationists needed. Joseph Nawahi, a member of the Hawaiian Kingdom's legislature since 1872, had long opposed the very thought of a reciprocity treaty. He said that the reciprocity treaty would be a "nation-snatching treaty," meaning that it would allow the United States to eventually annex Hawaii (Vowell 205).

Queen Lili'uokalani, sister to King Kalakaua, said the following in her personal memoir *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* about why her brother pursued the reciprocity treaty even though some of his subjects were against it. She said, "He freely gave his personal efforts to the securing of a reciprocity treaty with the United States, and sought the co-operation of that great and powerful nation, because he was persuaded it would enrich, or benefit, not one class, but, in a greater or less degree, all his subjects." This perfect situation was not to last. By 1887, the treaty had need to be renewed, and renewed it was. However, this time the rights to Pearl Harbor were given to the Union (179).

Why would a Native king, a monarch who is indebted to his people, sign such an agreement? He definitely didn't wake up one morning and say, "I think I'm going to let the Yankees have Pearl Harbor. My people will love me for that!" Oh no. This was an act of rebellion against the crown. On 6 July 1887



Kalākaua was forced to sign what has been nicknamed the Bayonet Constitution. Kalākaua was threatened by the Hawaiian League to sign it or be at risk for violent overthrow and death to him (Vowell 202). This constitution was framed primarily by Lorrin A. Thurston who was a descendant of missionaries and a prominent man in both the political and business spheres, which were essentially one sphere in this case. The Bayonet Constitution limited the power of the monarch and gave more power to the legislature. The men in the legislature were no longer appointed by the king and candidates, for the legislature had to meet land ownership and income qualifications in order to qualify. These restrictions made approximately two-thirds of the Native Hawaiian population ineligible to participate in the legislature. Not only did eligibility standard to run for position of a legislator become high and unattainable for many, but the standard to simply vote. Some of these men who forced the Bayonet Constitution on Kalākaua were close friends of him (Lili'uokalani 181).

It was Thurston and his newly appointed cabinet who were the ones to renew the reciprocity treaty plus the cessation of Pearl Harbor (Vowell 203). Some reasons why this band of rebels against the Kingdom, also known as the Hawaiian League, did this were to better protect their financial investments, to limit the frivolous spending of the “Merrie Monarch,” and to make a viable climate for which annexation could become possible (Trask 11).

Following the death of King David Kalākaua in 1891, his sister Lili'uokalani inherited the throne of the Hawaiian Kingdom. In the documentary Act of War: The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation, we learn of Queen Lili'uokalani's attempts to restore political power to her Native people and to the monarchy. Unfortunately, she was halted by those in the Hawaiian League. She was imprisoned in her own home—the 'Iolani Palace. She did not allow her people to fight physically because of the fear of injury or death to her people (Lili'uokalani 276). The sovereignty for which she stood for was stamped out by the descendants of the missionaries who loved and helped her people just decades before. Lili'uokalani, or her people, did not wish to be controlled by an alien government. Thurston and his gang established the ironically named Republic of Hawaii to be independent and not risk any more meddling from the President Grover Cleveland administration which ruled the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegal and violated treaties and agreements (Vowell 212).

After President Cleveland's time in office ended and President William McKinley was elected, the oligarchical government of the Republic submitted a Treaty of Annexation to the United States Congress which was rejected due to the twenty-thousand plus signatures Queen Lili'uokalani delivered to the Senate. The pro-annexationists had a way to get around the shot down treaty: a house joint resolution. In 1898, the resolution was passed with great support in the House of Representatives and Hawaii was annexed to the United States (Lili'uokalani 324).

Two factors that motivated congress to pass the resolution were the Spanish-American War and Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor proved too tantalizing for congress and their desire for expansionist America to rule the seas and become a superpower and to protect their financial investments. They did not care how they got the beautiful chain of islands; legality or honesty were not something they were entirely concerned with. Despite the good intentions King David Kalākaua had to secure the fiscal future of his people, the initial signing of the reciprocity was what ultimately made annexation more than just a mere dream; the signing made annexation a real possibility. On 7 July 1898, Hawaii let out her last gasp of breath as she submitted to the conquestual desires of the world-wide imperialistic superpower of the

United States of America. Hope to be a sovereign nation again drifted off in the vast Pacific (Lili'uokalani 282).

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: McKay West, "Christians: Peaceful Preachers of Hawaiian Conquerors?"  
For Professor Toa Tawa

When Hawaii is spoken of in America, there is never a negative image associated with it. In Izutsu Satoru's "Medical Education In Paradise: Another Facet Of Hawaii.", he says, "Mention 'Hawaii' and images are of bright, sandy beaches, warm surf, gentle breezes, and dancers swaying to the rhythm of a hula dance. Indeed, the word 'Hawaii' seems to be interchangeable with visions of 'paradise'" (2). Though these happy images associated with the Hawaiian culture are what is seen at first glance, the history of the culture has a well-hidden, melancholy past. If compared to the treatment of the Native Americans during the American conquest, these two nations are quite similar. Both experienced pains such as: disease brought from invaders from another country, the seizing of land forcing Native Americans to fight for their homes or submit to a new ruler's commands, and American military forces monitoring all aspects of Native life telling them where they can go and what they can say. Both cultures were first introduced to a new people—the Americans—and both cultures were later invaded and had their land taken from them. The difference is that the United States has covered up the sufferings of the Hawaiians, and they have kept hidden their true desires and opinions to the matter of annexation. In Haunani-Kay Trask's *From a Native Daughter*, she states that "Hawaiian's have been agitating for federal recognition of...the injury done by the United States at the overthrow, including the loss of lands and sovereignty" (27). One big resource the United States used was Christian missionaries. They converted the natives and then used their powers as ministers to control and instill the ideas of the government into the natives' minds. Christian missionaries wrongly influenced and seized the state of Hawaii with unethical tactics. They preyed on the weak minds of those who lost family from the plagues brought to Hawaii, they set up a government where their future offspring could rule in their stead, and they manipulated the kings of Hawaii to achieve their desires for annexation.

The Hawaiian culture was a flourishing culture previous to any outside interference. Their society had set in place a variety of beliefs, values, rules, and codes of conduct to follow which, if carried out correctly, would always lead to each individual native fulfilling his own needs as well as the needs of his family. Everyone understood the specific patterns they had to follow, and everyone was happy to do their part. With this set in place, the nation was sure to continue to flourish for many more centuries. However, in 1778, this culture encountered an unforeseen group of individuals that would forever change their way of life. A British crew, led by Captain James Cook, had discovered their homeland island of Hawaii. At first the Native Hawaiians admired him. In Roger C. Smith's "We Shall Soon See the Consequences of Such Conduct: John Ledyard Revisited," it is stated that they even "worshipped him as a god" (36). This was not to last though, as the Hawaiians soon realized that these outsiders were trouble. They soon killed Captain Cook, and in Corporal John Ledyard's journal, he explains that it was due to "insulting and inappropriate actions of the crew, and specifically Cook, toward Hawaiian customs and religious beliefs". This action frightened off the crew back to Great Britain, and all was well with the Native Hawaiians for the time being.

Nonetheless, even with Cook's crew gone, they had left something behind that would damage the Hawaiians more than they could possibly repair. David Stannard states in "Disease and Infertility: A New Look at the Demographic Collapse of Native Populations in the Wake of Western Contact," that "Syphilis, gonorrhoea, tuberculosis, and more—including, perhaps, influenza—tore through the Hawaiian

population as soon as their barrier of isolated [sic] was penetrated” (329). With the Native Hawaiians being sheltered from mainland contact throughout their existence, they never had encountered the various viruses and disease that were out there. None of the Hawaiians had built immunities to these mainland diseases, and very few of them had the strength to last past the scourges. Something as simple as the chicken pox wiped out village after village. The population was dwindling out of control, and there was nothing the Native Hawaiians could do. In Elizabeth Kapu’uwailani’s *Then There Were None*, it is reported that in 1778 there were 500,000 Pure Hawaiian’s living on the islands, but by 1821 that number dropped to 230,000, and by 1893, that number had fallen to just 40,000. Death and depression were beginning to seep into the population.

Thereafter, missionaries began to seep into the Hawaiian culture, and they spread their influences to many of the villagers. They conducted their sermons, and they included many passages promising eternal life and blessings of healing. They instilled fear into the natives informing them it was their fault that the plagues had inflicted them and were destroying their lives. They informed them of their sinful acts, and what treacheries they were committing in the eyes of God. Now although this may seem like an ordinary sermon given in the Christian culture, the afflictions that were being thrust upon the Hawaiians greatly affected their decision to join their churches. The arrival of the Calvinist also had a great role in their decisions. The Calvinistic stern behavior was not liked much by the natives, and thus their outlook on the Christian church became more highly favored. They began to believe strongly in these Christians, but were beginning to take the religious beliefs more literally than figuratively. “Missionary imperialism had been successful in converting our dying people who believed that the Christian promise of everlasting life meant the everlasting physical life of our nation” (Trask 6). With so many of their loved ones dead, the Native Hawaiians were beginning to become deeply involved in their new religious beliefs. This would later lead to many of their national decisions being influenced by their religious views.

As a result of the trust the natives placed in them, the missionaries began to set up forms of government that they themselves could be a part of and influence. They did this in a subtle manner though, beginning with simple tasks. Larry Kimura’s “Native Hawaiian Culture,” states “...William Richards, a missionary, became ‘chaplain, teacher [sic] and translator’ to the king...this is the beginning of the formal involvement of missionaries in the government of the Hawaiian Kingdom” (174). Other missionaries soon joined the king’s cabinet, including Gerrit P. Judd, Lorrin Andrews, and Richard Armstrong. These missionaries were able to convince the King to pass a policy of religious toleration as well as The Declaration of Rights and Laws in 1839 (Kimura 174). Each law passed brought the Americans one step closer to achieving Hawaiian Annexation.

Furthermore, with each occurrence of new laws passed, as well as the constant badgering of American economic forces, the missionaries were soon able to convince the chiefs and King to divide the lands of Hawaii in an act called the Mahele in 1848-1850. The Mahele was a proposition that allowed foreigners to purchase land of their own in Hawaii. This was a major feat for America, but it was another big step to the ultimate downfall of the Hawaiians. Haunani-Kay Trask tells of the result of the Mahele being created in *From a Native Daughter*:

Through the unrelenting efforts of missionaries like Gerrit P. Judd, the Mahele was attained in 1848-1850 (qtd. in Trask 6). Our disease ridden ancestors, confused by Christianity and preyed upon by capitalists, were thereby dispossessed. Traditional lands were quickly transferred to foreign ownership

and burgeoning sugar plantations. By 1888, three-quarters of all arable land was controlled by haole (white people). (6-7)

With the Mahele set in place, foreigners seized every opportunity to get a piece of land for themselves. This led to myriad changes to the Hawaiian way of life. With wealthy foreign land owners stepping into the picture, things like the Hawaiian League began to form. The Hawaiian League forced the king to replace the old constitution with a new one referred to as The Bayonet Constitution. In Neil Levy's "Native Hawaiian Land Rights," we are informed that the Bayonet Constitution "substituted the power of Western Landowners for that of the King" (861). This would, in turn, switch the voting power from noble Hawaiians selected by the chief to wealthy landowners who were able to pay taxes. This shift in the societal balance would soon affect Hawaiian decisions as a nation.

Obviously each King of Hawaii did not allow himself to be influenced so easily by the persistent pestering of the missionaries. In Kathleen Mellen's *The Lonely Warrior*, King Kamehameha consistently rejected any missionary conversion techniques, and did not allow himself to be influenced by them; Kamehameha even called one missionary out to leap from a thousand-foot precipice, "And if...your god whom you say can do anything, saves you from death, then I will consider your religion" (Mellen 157). Sadly, while each king did what he could to avoid granting the foreign American presence any more rights, the surrounding circumstances continued to worsen until they had no other option. One example of this is the story of Queen Lili'uokalani. In *Director Na Maka O Ka Aina's Act of War: The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation*, Lili'uokalani creates a new constitution to present to her people, but her missionary-filled cabinet will not approve her presentation. This forces her to wait, and soon after she is imprisoned and the monarchy overthrown. In James Blount's *The Executive Documents of the House of Representatives for the Third Session of the Fifty-Third Congress*, Lili'uokalani states, "I yield to the superior force of the United States of America...now, to avoid any collision of armed forces and perhaps the loss of life..." (586). Had those missionaries approved her presentation of the new constitution, the fate of Hawaii might have been different. They instead chose to wait out of fear and in the attempt to keep themselves in power; they allowed the Queen of Hawaii to be overthrown and the nation to fall into oligarchy.

In accordance to problems like this occurring, small efforts were pushed through by the Native Hawaiians to try and correct the wrong that had been done. When instances such as the formation of the Reform Party occurred, the Hawaiians returned fire with parties of their own. Douglas Askman states in "Her Majesty's Disloyal Opposition: An Examination of the English-Language Version of Robert Wilcox's *The Liberal, 1892-1893*" that "...a new pro-monarchist political party was formed to counter the policies of the Reform Party. It was styled the National Reform Party..." (180). These actions instigated by the Hawaiians were put down quickly though, as they were not in favor of what the missionaries desired. In 1898, the missionaries succeeded in annexing Hawaii and putting the final wedge into the Hawaiian culture.

To summarize, Christian missionaries played a big role in the slow annexation of Hawaii. They took advantage of every opportunity that they could, and in the process they destroyed the Hawaiian culture. They found success in their early attempts to convert those dying from disease to their churches. They then proceeded to embed themselves in every part of the Hawaiian Government, and with their new found roles, they persistently controlled each King and Queen of Hawaii as their puppet to pass whatever legislative law they wished. They were a crucial factor in the United States receiving Hawaii as

one of its states. With all of their actions, they can and should be looked at not so much as Christian missionaries, but as American businessman.

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## Expressive- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Damon Esancy, "Scars"

Withheld by student's request

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Amanda Mills, "Storytellers"

For Dr. Jessica Tvordi

I tap my fingers relentlessly on the desk. The sound is uneven, the accent on every other beat. It sounds like a bad audio track of a horse clip-clopping its way down a country lane, but it helps me think. I love the challenge of the sonnet form. The rhyme scheme is simple enough, but the iambic pentameter can be difficult. That is why I enjoy it so much.

There is something completely engrossing in being lost in a repeating rhythm. That horse is going to be trotting for quite a while as I continue to write phrases and erase them when they sound unnatural. After all, iambic pentameter is meant to sound like human speech, though perhaps somewhat lofty and noble.

Shakespeare was brilliant when it came to rendering poetry as speech. His one hundred fifty-four sonnets and thirty-seven plays testify to that fact. I wonder how much he had at home, unpublished, deemed unworthy for other eyes. I glance sideways, to the growing pile I have placed into that category. I turn again to my example poem, Shakespeare's Sonnet 29, refocusing on the task at hand. "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, / I all alone beweep my outcast state." How would it feel to be completely alone? Outcast.

I throw away my old paper, marred by gray smears where lines have been erased too many times. I carve dark ribbons of words into a field of snowy white. Outcast. I add notes as I think of them: cast out, thrown out, force. A list forms beneath my title. Each word has a story to tell, and I pour over them, giving each one its chance. Robin Hood has potential, but he was an outlaw, not an outcast. He had comrades fighting by his side. I cross out "forgotten," writing "force" next to it. By its very definition, forgetting is unintentional. "Criminal" and "thief" are both possible subjects. I ponder over them for a moment before I continue down the list.

"Traitor" seems to jump off the page. I let my imagination begin to play with details. He is a relatively young man, of noble birth. His betrayal is large. It changes the entire course of a nation. I stop for a moment. Perhaps my man was framed. Perhaps he was the tragic hero, portrayed as the worst of criminals when he was truly a good man.

I cross that out. Regret would isolate him far more powerfully than a false accusation. I wanted him to loathe himself, not the system that placed him there. I did not want him looking for allies. I hesitated for only a moment before giving him this most piteous of stories. Writers in general are cruel to their characters. It makes those characters far more interesting.

I seem to be following Shakespeare's example well. In the example poem, the speaker has someone he loves to ease his melancholy, but his tragedies have no such provisions. Ophelia has no one to comfort her in her suicide. Othello has no way to repent of his crime. Macbeth loses both his honor and his wife before he is finally slain.

Should my traitor be killed? Should he be left to wander the earth for all his days, cursing the day he betrayed the country of his birth? That would certainly give him a longer time to feel the consequences of his betrayal. However, my story is just a snapshot of my traitor's life. He could be an old man,



weeping for his mistake as he tells an impressionable youth his sorry tale. He could be a young man, just entering court and not yet knowing that he will be the instrument of destruction for his country. He could be standing before a judge, waiting for his sentence to be spoken. Or, even better, he could be on his way to the executioner.

This seems to speak the most possibilities for my poem. I flip the paper over, sharpen my pencil, and let slow strokes form a string of reason. I begin tapping again, and somehow, the words align to my meter. I write another line, tap, and alter a few words.

The story emerges in its entirety. The sonnet is not from the man's perspective. It is from the crowd, and these peasants are looking for vengeance. They see no regret, nor would they forgive him if they did. My character has evolved beyond my outline, as all good characters should do, and he does not shy away from his fate. He refuses to exhibit the anguish and misery I had planned for him.

Now, this brings up even more questions. What kind of man would not feel sorrow for a crime that ended up being the deaths of people he knew? What kind of man would face an executioner with pride in his eyes? Whatever I have created, he is far more interesting than an old man bemoaning his fate to the empty desert.

It is possible, too, that he does feel regret, and the speaker is too emotionally involved in the events of the poem to be a reliable narrator. I have not yet decided. In fact, I will probably leave it vague and allow the readers to debate it. My sonnet has become a story that neither begins nor ends with me.

When I look at Shakespeare, I see the same circumstances. I see characters rounded enough to stand on their own, with real motives and pasts that change the course of the story. They act because it is in their personality, rather than because Shakespeare told them to act. They are people beyond the lines that Shakespeare gave them, beyond the scenes in which they appear.

He grounds these characters in innate human truths. His tragedies speak to me because I have seen those failings in myself or my acquaintances. His comedies are some of the few that have lasted through time, because they are based not on references of his age, but on traits and personalities that I see every day. Great tales are not based on outlines, but on life.

In all my writing, my goal is that sense of reality. Even fantasy, even magic, should have relevance to the reader. Shakespeare's world, whether it be Rome, Padua, or Bavaria, is like fantasy to me. I have not seen these worlds, but I know them, just as I know his characters. They are real to me because I have read Shakespeare's works.

I look again at Shakespeare's outcast. He, too, is a man, brought to life by fourteen lines that subsist on the rhythm of a trotting horse. He lives and breathes through the rhythm of language, a rhythm that elevates his story to something beyond mere communication. It has become a work of art.

I turn to my traitor and observer. They may not be Shakespeare, but they live. I can feel their breath in the lines I have given them. I smile down at them like a proud parent, and set the poem in the pile deemed fit for human eyes. I sit back and take out a fresh sheet of paper. They have given me an idea.

Called forth, this lowly cur, to meet his fate,  
The sureness of his footsteps hides his fear.  
And facing the assembly at the gate,

The ghosts of dead men quietly appear.  
These men were killed by avarice and spite,  
A crime for which this man shows no regret.  
Now, after they were murdered in the night,  
They march with him to payment of his debt.  
He stands before the unforgiving crowd.  
He turns to face the bloody western sky.  
His face is white, but too, his eyes are proud,  
And proudly, too, does he go on to die.  
He closes eyes to those he has betrayed  
And takes the righteous fury of the blade.

Honorable Mention: Sierra Gish, "A Shakespearean Festival"  
For Professor Joy Sterrantino

Sixth grade was the peak of my elementary school cliques and insecurities. It was also the first time I'd ever acted in a Shakespearean play. While Shakespeare and elementary school popularity don't seem like they have anything in common, in my experience they did. Now when I encounter Shakespeare, I usually flash back briefly to this year in school. By the end of my involvement, I viewed Shakespeare as a confidence booster and a social equalizer. I liked Shakespeare, not because I relished the complex writing or detailed plots, but because he helped me grow and overcome fears.

First of all, let me set the stage with my sixth grade social standing. Simply put, I was not one of the cool kids. At that point in time I had a few strikes against me. My mom taught at school, and as much as I love my mom, she wasn't exactly the Ms. Honey of Matilda's time or the Hilary Swank of "Freedom Writers." Even if she were, by the last year of school most sixth graders disliked all authority (and therefore my association with it), preferring showing off instead. Second of all, I was a nerd. I didn't keep up with the popular TV shows, I read a lot more than an average kid, and I worked hard for perfect grades. Combine these factors with severe shyness, and the result left me dreading social interaction. Meaning I usually spent recess reading and avoiding the occasional kickball aimed at my head.

Normally my introvert tendencies steered me away from performing, especially in front of large crowds. But when my school announced the upper grades were putting on a "mini Shakespeare festival," my interest was piqued. As tryouts approached, I realized that I actually wanted to participate. My confidence came from previous exposure to Shakespeare's plays. I had watched both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado about Nothing* with my family during the Shakespeare Festival in Cedar. I'd also helped my local church group put on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I felt comfortable with the language, the blocking; I knew this stuff. I knew I could act out the parts, and act them well. Socially, I was motivated by an opportunity to step outside my current boundaries. I knew a lot of other kids were trying out, popular or not, and I hoped to make more friends. Plus, I viewed theater as a very "cool" thing to do. After all, my older brother (an almighty high school man) participated in theater, and he was, in my opinion, the coolest person I knew. I secretly dreamed of a performance amazing enough to propel myself into higher social standing.

So I signed up for a time slot and prepared lines from a list of suggested monologues. Actually, I felt such excitement that I prepared two. I knew most people planned to use Puck's lines, probably because they were the easiest to understand and perform. But for the first time in my life I didn't want to do what everyone else was doing. I was so certain of my acting ability that I wanted to stick out from the crowd. I picked different monologues, with more difficult language, in the hopes that my obvious talent would be recognized. I memorized my lines, coordinated movements, rehearsed them in front of my family, and, this time, instead of turning me into a nerd, my academic drive paid off. As I watched some of my peers try out, I remember feeling secretly superior, even smug. Most hadn't even looked at their lines, let alone memorized them. I performed my pieces and walked off the stage feeling comfortable and happy.

The performance was to be a combination of Shakespeare's works, condensing some plays and including random scenes from others, all performed by a supposed Shakespeare troop for the amusement of Queen Elizabeth. As I anxiously waited for posting of the final casting list, I looked at the directory of

plays planned and possible characters. I decided that I'd be comfortable in any role, except for Juliet's I was terrified of people thinking I actually liked the boy playing Romeo, and teasing me about it. This was sixth grade after all, when secretly liking boys started to happen, but actually admitting it felt embarrassing, even humiliating. Yet that's exactly the part I received. I was devastated. The entire week after trying out I had repeated to everyone that listened, "I'll be happy with anything, except Juliet." It practically became my mantra, and only in some sick irony would I receive the only, ONLY part I didn't want. Apparently I lived in a sick irony. Adding to my troubles, I really disliked the boy cast as my lover. Even though I lived at the bottom of the social ladder, I judged as shallowly as the next kid and viewed Luke, the slightly effeminate crybaby of the school, as embarrassing. I didn't want to associate love with him of all people. Somewhere between half laughing at the odds, I think I burst into tears. How was I going to fix this?

I started by pulling a classic twelve-year-old move; I made my mom talk to the director. During the conversation they repeatedly assured me that I'd given the best performance at the tryouts. Romeo and Juliet was the longest play, and consequently they needed a strong actor (me) to play this character. Finally, after the coaxing and ego-stroking, I made a slightly more grown up move and decided to perform anyway, finding a way to work with Luke. And surprisingly, I stopped disliking him. In a less important situation I might not have spent the time to get to know him. But as we worked in a quiet darkened auditorium, I found myself appreciating his understanding for Shakespeare and how quickly he memorized his lines. Although I'm sure I still turned an intense red every time we touched or held hands, I learned to stop judging Luke by the surface. Shakespeare transformed us both, first into characters, but then into normal people, almost friends. Though we never turned into best friends, I, at least, learned to look past surface appearances.

I built another relationship working through Shakespeare. Alena Gibb was one of the most popular girls in school. She was also, in my opinion, incredibly intimidating. Having hit her growth spurt much earlier than anyone else in the grade, she stood taller than most girls. Although that might have embarrassed some, she carried herself with confidence and wasn't afraid to voice a different or uncommon opinion. To me she looked completely untouchable. This changed when she was cast as Queen Elizabeth, a role that required her face to be covered entirely in white makeup and her neck wrapped in something akin to a tutu. I don't know exactly how she felt about it; she hid any embarrassment with her usual humor and poise. But now the playing field appeared leveled. Suddenly she didn't seem so superior, because for my role, I got to wear a long Cinderella-like dress, my hair done-up, with real lipstick on my lips. Now I felt like the tall admirable one. I was the one voicing a contrary opinion: Juliet, choosing to love whomever she wanted, despite discouragement and prejudice from everyone around her. Once I felt on more equal footing with Alena, we started talking. Granted, she mostly humored me at first, but the relationship that began with Shakespeare lasted through a carpool, junior high, and high school. Like my relationship with Luke, once we got past the mandated cliques, we saw each other as people and became friends.

My first big experience with Shakespeare didn't exactly leave me feeling a great pleasure or appreciation for his writing. But I gained a lot of other things instead. By the end of the play, I viewed his works as a way to pull people out of their respective comfort zones and grow personally. I gained a brand-new confidence from realizing I understood my lines easily and could turn those lines into a story. After working with Shakespeare, I never feared the archaic language of his plays. Once rigid lines between social groups relaxed, I learned to not use those lines as rules for assessment. I faced an uncomfortable

situation, worked through it, and found more good than bad. Though only in elementary school, Shakespeare helped me mature and begin the pattern of closing social rifts and finding confidence that I followed for the rest of my life.