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You Never Forget the First Time

Death is part of life. You cannot escape it. You never know when it will happen. It was 2:00 am in the dead of winter. I was a newly qualified Rescue Swimmer with only four rescues under my belt. Flying for the Coast Guard is not like normal flying. When the weather is so bad that commercial airliners are canceling flights, we are starting our engines and going right into the storm to save someone. We train constantly, but nothing beats Mother Nature.

We were hovering in a helicopter above a small ocean bay 150 miles northwest of Kodiak, Alaska. There were five fishermen in a life raft stuck in the sea ice under us. With our thermal camera we could see a little movement, just enough so that we knew they were still alive. We could not quit now; if we did they would die. Communications back to the Coast Guard home base was spotty at best. We had to relay our position to a C130 airplane that was circling 10,000 feet above us, so if we crashed, the guys coming to rescue us would have an idea where to start searching. The outside temperature was -26F. When we opened the sliding door, my lower jaw started to freeze. Even with thick arctic gloves, my hands started to hurt almost instantly. The bottle of water I had that was at room temperature 30 minutes earlier was frozen solid. I know its cold when my teeth hurt. The ocean below looked like an arctic wasteland of ice and rocks. The wind was hitting the helicopter at 126 miles per hour, coming over a ridge and knocking us sideways, backwards, and sometimes making us drop so fast that anything not tied down would fly around the inside of the cabin. The turbulence was so violent that if I relaxed my neck muscles, I'm sure my spine would have snapped.

My flight mechanic, who was sitting next to me, grabbed a garbage bag and got so sick I wondered if he would be able to finish the rescue. The co-pilot asked for a bag as well, but we could not jump up to give it to him without bouncing around ourselves. I put on my gunner's belt, a seat belt that allows us to move around the cabin without falling out of the helicopter. I held on tight to anything that was not moving as I slowly made my way the six feet to give him the bag. Finally, ten long minutes later, I was back in my seat, fully belted in. Another drop, this time down and sideways at the same time, was so violent that the front of my helmet hit the inside of the helicopter, shattering the clear bullet-proof plastic visor.

In that instant, it occurred to me that we were not going to make it. Even at 25 feet above the ice and water, the crash would be fatal. Maybe one or two would survive, but not all of us and certainly not the five fisherman we were trying to save. I had to come to grips with having no control over this situation. The flight mechanic and I looked at each other. With the same look in his eyes, we both knew. We nodded to each other, shrugged, and decided that we would do our jobs until we could not anymore. I remembered an old Coast Guard motto: “You have to go out, but you don’t have to come back.” It appeared it would ring true that night.

We decided I would be lowered down to assess the survivors. If one or more was dead, we would not get them that day. I put my ski goggles on, scooted on my butt to the open doorway, clipped my harness into the hoist hook (like a winch on a 4x4 vehicle), and gave the thumbs up. I was ready to go. As I was being lowered into the freezing darkness, I mumbled to myself, “I hope I don’t hit the ice too hard and break my legs.” Between the wind, the cold and the adrenaline, if I was going to have a heart attack this was the time.

My memory of the rest of the night is just still pictures in my mind of the five guys in the raft. They were all alive but covered in sea ice, eyes as big as dinner plates when I popped my head into the life raft. One at a time, the rescue basket was lowered, and each survivor was hoisted up. The last survivor went up, and I then waited for my turn. I was still sure something bad was going to happen. I watched as the helicopter bounced in the wind. When the hook came down for me, I hooked up as fast as I could. I had never been so scared in my life. I do not remember the 30-minute flight back to base. During that time I finally realized we would be all right. We landed at 6:00 am and shut down the helicopter. The ambulance was there ready to take the survivors. No words were said. Both pilots, the flight mechanic, and I hugged each other. We had made it.

The years and rescue cases that have followed were filled with many more times when I felt that I would die, but I noticed that each time it happened, the adrenaline levels got lower and lower. I don’t remember the details of each scary rescue I have been through. However, the first time will always stick out in my mind. I have learned to ignore the fear. It has come to the point that I am able to fall asleep in the helicopter, even in the worst

of storms. I know my job is dangerous; that will never change. It may seem odd, but rescue work truly does become easier knowing that there is a distinct possibility of slowly dying, cold and alone somewhere in the vast sea. However, I also have been able to save lives, and for me, there is no greater calling. I will always know that my job is dangerous. That will never change.

My Identity

“Don’t go with him!” yelled a voice from across the room. The male character on the TV screen is begging his wife to not go with his rival. He has been chained hand and foot, leaving only his mouth to speak. “Why don’t you say anything? Why don’t you tell him the truth?” he continues. The female actress wearing a long white dress keeps on walking away from him while her tears are running down her face. “She needs to speak up.” I cringe to my 75-year-old grandma as the commercial break comes on. “It’s time for lunch,kiddo!” My grandma taps my shoulder as she points at a rectangle-shaped clock that has been hanging above the TV as long as I can remember. Slowly standing up, I escort my grandma to the kitchen while chatting with her about my thoughts on the drama.

One of my favorite hobbies in Cambodia was catching up on fictional drama series before and after lunch with my grandma, as it was her only relaxing hour. We loved discussing our opinions about what was going to happen in the next episode. My grandma has a narrow, innocent face with very light skin, and ear-length, wavy grey hair. Just like women in Cambodia, she usually wears a light button-up blouse paired with a traditional bottom piece of clothing that in South Asia is called a sarong. It is an ankle-length patterned skirt made of thin soft fabric wrapped around the waist, with the top corner tucked into the waist to secure it. Often people have described me as the little version of my grandma. They are not referring to our looks. What they mean is that we both are soft-spoken, modest people. Most of the time, they categorize that as indicating weakness. I do see that our personalities parallel each other. However, I disagree with the stereotyping that calmness is a sign of being weak. I think my grandma is a very strong woman. When I look at her, despite her outside appearance, and petite figure, I see that she is capable of anything.

From the day I was born to my college years, there has been no one else whom I have lived with longer than with my grandma. When I was two, my mother was very busy with her job so that she could support her family. Therefore, my grandma became my second mother. She did everything she could from feeding me three meals a day, to washing the bed sheets of my

vomits. I slept next to her ever since I was a toddler until my last days living in Cambodia.

I remember one night in Cambodia in 2006 around 9:00 pm. After everyone had finished their dinner, my grandma was in the kitchen wrapping up our leftovers to feed the dogs and chickens. I was sitting at the desk in the living room drawing a tree for my fifth grade art class. Suddenly I heard a voice shouting from the kitchen. "Help!" At first I had forgotten that anyone was still there. *Who just said that?* I thought to myself as continuing to draw the leaves. A few seconds later, I heard it again louder and clearer. I recognized that voice! Immediately, I knew my grandma was calling us for help. I jumped off the chair ran down to the kitchen to see what was happening. I saw her on the floor holding on to her knees. "I think I have been bitten by a snake!" cried out my grandma. My face turned pale. I was in a total panic. In the country-side, poisonous animals are usually easy to spot. They can get into a house at any time of the day. However, snake accidents usually happen only to the farmers who work in the dirt all day. It is rare to find one in a house. Soon, my grandma's left knee started to bleed. I shouted my brother's name. He was sitting outside on a bench with one hand on his guitar and the other flipping through a music book. He rushed down to the scene, grabbing the ignition key that was hung on the wall, carried my grandma to our truck, and drove her to the hospital. I kept on praying along the way. We arrived at the hospital in seven minutes.

This was the first time I had ever been inside a hospital. Even when my mother gave birth to me, I was born at my house. Therefore, I never knew what a hospital felt or smelled like. As we walked in, I noticed very bright ceiling lights, colorless rooms, and a beeping sound coming from almost every corner. My grandma was carried to a big noisy room where each bed was separated by blue curtains. I was sitting on a wooden chair next to her. I began to inhale through my mouth, because the medication smell was awfully strong. A few minutes later, a forty-year-old doctor who was covered in a mask and gloves and white rope came to my grandma, flashing a light to the bitten spot, and then applying some type of liquid gel onto it. He also gave her an injection. "This will help ease the pain for a while. Also take these medicines in the next couple hours. Luckily it's not a King Cobra that bit you," he told my grandma, who was lying on a bed, looking very pale. The doctor wrapped the bite mark with white cloth. We brought her home an hour later, as she insisted.

That night, I knew she was in tremendous pain. She tried to be as silent as she could so I could sleep, but I could still hear her soft weeping. Watching her going through pain like this, I realized something that I had never thought before. With tears rolling down my cheeks, I realized that I had been too dependent on her my whole life. She had been there for me all the time, which sometimes made me forget that she is growing old. *Have I been taking her for granted?* I kept on questioning myself. I was lying down next to her. I looked at her while she slept. This was the first time I had ever seen her cry. I remembered once she told me when the Khmer Rouge came along in 1972, she lost three children and her husband in one month. My father was the only one left alive in the family; however, he was chosen to live with the soldiers. Therefore, she was all by herself. “You get to the point when everybody in your family dies. You can’t even cry anymore,” she told me. These were words that I would never forget. Aside from that, she was starving and working from dawn to nightfall.

From that night, I learned to fully appreciate my grandma. I feel that I transitioned from a child to a grownup as a result of that experience. She is my greatest influence. She taught me to be an independent person as she has been all her life. I learned to conquer my fears and weaknesses in various aspects of life. I know I will never be as strong as she is; however, my grandma inspired me to be the most positive version of myself every day and in every situation I come across. For that, I am forever grateful to have grown up with her. I believe a person’s perspective is mostly based on where they come from and who they grow up with. My grandma’s positivity is a key element that everybody needs to fulfill themselves in life.

Embrace

My vision is getting blurry; my eyes turning red, I try to make a sound but nothing comes out. I've just come home from school where I had a great day with my 2nd grade class, making some new friends, and loving my new teacher, but now I stand alone in the kitchen gasping my last breaths. I peer over to the room across the hall and feel my feet slowly catching up to my head. I'm very close to my brother; we love to watch TV together after school. I look over to the living room and there he is, eyes glued to a show, unaware of his surroundings. I can't yell or even build up a faint sound. I bang my hand against the wall but he doesn't look, thinking it's just his little brother messing around in the kitchen. Suddenly the sliding doors to the backyard fling open and my dad, who saw me turning red from outside, comes sprinting over to perform the Heimlich Maneuver. My father waits until my mother returns from work to explain to her that he wants to take me to the hospital.

Most kids hate hospitals, but my mother is a doctor and I would spend some days in the office with her. At a young age it helped me grow accustomed to the atmosphere. They do their tests; I don't really know what's going on. I'm being rolled from one area to the next, every sign and wall looking the same as the last. I'm lost but then the rolling stops and I'm put in a room with my father and mother by my side. The doctor walks in and the next word, which awakens the room, is "cancer." I don't have asthma; I have a tumor in my chest and it's leukemia.

First grade is the worst. In class, we sat in a circle and listened to the teacher read a terrible book all day. I've just come home and head straight for the kitchen. I go to grab my favorite snack of raw cookie dough but it's no longer in the fridge. I look up and there it is dangling at the top of the freezer out of the reach of hungry kids. It doesn't matter though, so I grab the cereal box left on the counter and join my brother for some TV. My mother is at work and my dad is either at work in Boston or in his office at home all day. Since he works in the city, sometimes I'm already asleep by the time he gets home. He does construction and has his

own company that he shares with his brother, so he's constantly busy. Sometimes when I catch him marching into the office at the end of the hall I'll grab onto his leg, sit on his foot, and hang on as he takes me with him. Inside his office, it's so quiet I could hear a pin drop. No words are spoken. I climb under the table and play with a ruler and pencils, pretending I'm building something like my dad, but we don't talk. We would build in the same room but never speak. To be honest I don't know a lot about my dad. We don't do much together.

It seems like ages since the doctor told me I had leukemia, about a year and a half now, if I had to guess. My dad had to put his job on hold to take care of me full-time. We're in the car now. It's 6:00 am and we're making a daily trip to Boston. My father has us take the Mini Cooper. He tells my mother that he has to so he can park in the cramped lots of the city, but it's also just really fun to drive. One time he hit the bumper going up the parking garage ramp at the Jimmy Fund Hospital, but I promised him I would never tell mom. We have developed these rituals now since we've been making the same trip down the same roads together for what feels like ages. We have our Exit 5 pitstop where we stop every time to grab a coffee and snacks, then the usual swearing at traffic from my dad once we get just outside of Boston. It hasn't worked yet, but somehow he believes swearing will make cars move. Then we always will pick a car, take an alternative route around a block, and see if we can beat it to the next set of lights. We have won a few times and will win again today.

The Jimmy Fund hospital is where I can finally relax with my dad. We sit in the waiting room, both munching on a tiny box of Cheerios from the collection on the table, both sipping on early morning coffee talking about school and the ride up. The checkups have become a piece of cake for me by this point. I've had radiation, chemotherapy, three bone marrow aspirations, a port put into my chest, and a spinal tap. The daily checkups, drawing blood, and pumping more medication into me has become fun, because I get to miss school and be with my dad all day. We usually end the day with our last ritual of the food court just across the street from the hospital. I remember the time after my first bone marrow aspiration that I was absolutely inflated with morphine. I couldn't walk due to the pain of doctors drilling into my back, so

I ordered my dad to wheel me into the food court so I could order some McDonalds. I can still remember crossing the street in a wheelchair, my dad dodging the little cracks on the road in order not to hurt my back, because our new mission that day was to get a Big Mac, no matter what.

I'm 20 years old now and still appreciate everything my father did for me. He gave up his business and social life to watch over me while I was at my worst, and we became a lot closer because of it. I didn't communicate much with him before everything happened. We didn't talk a lot or do anything together, but now I actually build for real with him at work. Cancer wasn't fun, but it brought the family closer, especially my father and me. I won't thank cancer for that, but I'll embrace it.

When I Write My Next Essay...

The white Ikea light on my desk flickers behind me, casting my silhouette atop the collage of pictures of my friends and family, amid movie ticket stubs and handwritten notes; each represents moments that have brought me to this point. My legs rest on the bed before me, my sheets covered in a layer of textbooks, notes, and flashcards, my laptop balanced atop my knees. My headphones are plugged in, filling my ears with familiar melodies that blur out the other distractions that always seem to be calling. Every assignment begins with this scene: the window is always dark, my hair braided back, and the main question written on a fluorescent sticky note taped to my computer. Every essay begins with just my initial thoughts and feelings, each in a new paragraph, written exactly as I would speak them, filled with “like” and “um,” and long run-on sentences that continue along until a full idea comes to fruition.

The first essay I had faced in nearly a year and a half stared me down. It demanded that I discuss a topic I had been considering for the past two years. The word “identity” leapt off the prompt and dragged my eyes up to my art portfolio displayed on the wall. Graphite drawings of locks, each representing a way in which my high school self felt like she was hiding a piece of herself away cued me to write about what it means to be biracial. My fingers began to spit out anecdotes of anything possibly related, creating chaos in a Word Document. With all my thoughts expelled from my head, I started to piece together the puzzle of this first essay.

Sifting through the chaos, struggling to pull together the right string of words that I could write my paper around, I was able to find the sentence that my paper would frame. The line was, “I was born one [an American] but despite seeing my blonde-haired and blue-eyed mother every morning I also wake up to my father, with his black hair and an accent to match his eyes.” This line made me smile every time I read it, and I knew that it would have a place in the paper. By the end of my revision process, I had found the place where the sentence would make the most sense. I spent the rest of the process rearranging my anecdotes, because, despite my love for chronology, working within the confining 1200-word limit forced me to simplify the stories down to the relevant points. Whenever I reread the drafts, my eyes always focused

on places where I could *show* the reader what was happening, where I could describe not just the scene but my interactions with my environment. My fingers gently moved across the keyboard, searching for the words that could properly show the connection between my thinking and my physical reactions until I finally ended up with a description of a moment of thought I had on my most recent flight home from Japan. The sentences I wrote said:

After hours on an airplane, thinking about how much I've changed in my time there everything seemed to solidify. The black ocean blended into the navy sky, my mind trying to mirror its clarity and depth, my thoughts trying to organize themselves into coherent constellations, while the altitude left my previous fears of judgment abandoned on the ground.

In an earlier draft of this paper, these sentences had told the reader only that I spent a lot of time thinking on the plane ride home. But with a nearly excessive use of imagery and metaphor, I was able to transform it and give the scene a more dream-like quality. The metaphors fell into the essay like fog settling. In the final part of the revision process, I made sure that those unique scenes would be understandable to the reader, because sometimes my metaphors only make sense to me.

At the other end of my writing ability spectrum, another assignment brought out a fact-oriented style of writing, with minimal original thought and an overabundance of outside sources speckling the pages. My paper was about a recent piece of legislation being discussed in the Massachusetts Senate, proposing that the state achieve 100% renewably sourced energy by 2050. Just as I had done with my other papers, I sat in my room, this time straight-backed, elbows resting on my desk, hair braided and away from my face, the same Ikea lamp directing light down on my fingers. My desk and lap were filled with library books, each opened up with sticky notes marking important pages, while 20 different tabs sat atop my computer screen. In my Microsoft document the sources were already alphabetically assembled, and arranged under the title "Bibliography." As I typed out facts and opinions pulled from those books, the in-text citations quickly fell into place. I filled in each paragraph's purpose with all the data required to communicate its point, until it overflowed with headache-inducing history and statistics. I initially began this essay telling my reader:

Climate change and global warming have been looming over citizens of the United States for decades, and especially

within the past 50 years, where, despite knowledge that carbon dioxide conducts heat, the continuation of deforestation and use of various fossil fuels has caused a 40% increase in the atmosphere's carbon dioxide concentration.

My monstrous first sentence assaulted readers with information before even drawing them in or informing them as to what I was actually going to discuss in the paper. By the end it had become a manageable two lines, simply presenting the idea of climate change in the northeastern United States: "Climate change has been looming over the citizens of the United States for decades, and the northeast region of the continental US has been the hardest hit." The rest of the essay quickly followed suit. Information unnecessary to the paper's purpose fell off the pages, only to be replaced by more relevant facts. My deletions left space to discuss funding possibilities for the bill, S. 1849.

I felt a sense of pride when I finished this paper. This felt different from the pride I felt after completing the first assignment, when I had written about only my own experiences. Although I had put my name atop many research papers in the past, this topic forced me to jump into government documents in a way that I had not yet done. Reading and comprehending the language was nearly as difficult as trying to get in contact with the Senator who had written those words in the first place. This information-packed essay required me to reign in imagination, while still demanding that I smoothly sew together the ideas and information that were initially never meant to meet.

When I write my next essay, I will sit at my desk, the lights in my room all turned on, the brightness on my laptop turned as low as it can go: yoga pants, sweatshirt, hair braided back, and headphones playing the same monotonous melodies. My laptop will be resting on my knees, the essay prompt occupying half of the screen as a list of my thoughts and feelings sit opposite it, waiting to be rearranged and organized into a coherent paper. My leading sentence, the first words to greet my reader, will be short, sweet, and to the point, giving my reader just a taste of what is to come. Among the paragraphs, gently seasoned with my ideas and the ideas of those cited following my conclusion, will sit the one line of the paper that was composed so perfectly that it could not be cut. In its final form the paper will be meticulously reviewed, each read-through coaxing out the mismatching verb tenses and cutting up the run-on sentences until it is nearly mistake free.

Plastic Bag Ban in Plymouth, Massachusetts

Over the past few decades, people have become increasingly dependent on disposable plastic items in everyday life. Most bottled drinks now come in plastic instead of glass; prepared bread, produce, and meat come sealed in varieties of plastic packaging. Plastic has become so frequently used because it is more economical to manufacture and lighter to transport than paper or other materials. People have become too reliant on this cheap, disposable way of life. For many, it is hard to imagine doing weekly shopping without bringing home the groceries in single-use plastic bags. The unfortunate fact is that plastic bags have a devastating impact on the environment.

Many cities and towns in the United States already have restrictions on the distribution of plastic bags. Currently in Massachusetts there are thirty-six communities that have passed similar “bag bans.” After observing how other local towns banned plastic bags, Ken Stone led a two-year fight to pass a bag ban in Plymouth. On October 15, 2016 Stone and his partner, Lee Burns, succeeded in their efforts to pass Article 28: “The Plastic Bag Ban” (DeSisto and Stone). This bylaw should influence Plymouth’s citizens to realize the necessity of living a more “green” lifestyle. By cutting out disposable items such as plastic bags, people can reduce the amount of plastic waste that sits in landfills or pollutes the oceans.

Single-use plastic bags were originally introduced in the 1970s to replace paper bags. At that time they were considered to be the better alternative to paper bags. Conserving trees was a main priority for environmental activists of this time, sometimes referred to as “tree huggers,” who supported replacing paper bags with plastic because they did not waste trees. The popularity of plastic bags came not only from people’s impression that plastic was a more ecofriendly choice. As Greg Horn explains, “handled plastic carry bags have become the world’s favorite way to carry purchases. They’re light, cheap, strong, waterproof and durable. For these reasons, we use as many as a trillion a year” (92). Plastic is a more inexpensive and sturdy option compared to paper; overall it appeared to be the superior material for disposable bags.

There is no doubt that plastic bags are useful, but there

should be more concern for what is best for the future than what is more convenient right now. Ken Stone started his local research by looking at exactly how many plastic bags businesses distribute. When a survey was conducted of the seven supermarkets in Plymouth, it was discovered that the town goes through a total of about 18 million disposable plastic bags a year; that's an astonishing 51,000 bags per week.

People realize now that paper is the better option to disposable bags. Paper come from trees, which are a renewable resource; a tree that has been cut down can be replaced by planting another. In his research, Stone found that plastic makes up four times as much solid waste as paper. Fifty-eight percent of paper bags are recycled because they are accepted for recycling everywhere. Despite the fact that plastic does degrade over time, it takes hundreds, even thousands of years to do so. During this time, they will take up space in landfills or in the ocean while they break down. Degradable plastic is defined as plastic "in which the degradation results from the action of naturally-occurring microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi and algae" (Eich, et. al. 2). Degradation only means that eventually plastic will break down into smaller and smaller pieces, but will never fully decompose unlike a biodegradable material such as paper. To make the transition from plastic to reusable bags easier, Stone thinks that the best option for Plymouth would be to approve the use of paper bags that contain at least forty percent recycled material.

If plastic bags aren't ending up in a landfill, then they are littering the coastlines. Conventional plastic never biodegrades, so every piece of plastic that ever enters the ocean will always be there. According to Stone's research, The Ocean Conservancy has pointed out that plastic bags make up the third largest type of litter from land-based sources found on United States coasts, surpassed only by cigarette butts and plastic bottle caps. This can lead to marine animals choking on plastic, as well as the toxins in polluted water.

A very small percent of plastic bags end up being recycled. Conway states that "The EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency) estimated that only 5.2 percent of plastic bags and sacks in the municipal waste stream in 2005 were recycled. The town of Plymouth does not offer recycling for plastic bags, so most of those bags are reused once or twice and then end up in the garbage. Even Waste Management, the nation's largest trash hauler, does not offer plastic bag recycling. This is most likely

because it costs more money to recycle a plastic bag than it does to make a new one.

The plastic bag ban movement has already spread to towns and cities across Massachusetts. Residents in these areas have made the adjustment from plastic to paper or the most recommended option durable, reusable cloth bags that will last for years. Locals are concerned as to exactly how this bylaw will affect their normal shopping routine once the ban is enforced. It will take six months for the bylaw to go into effect, at which time it will only apply to businesses with two or more establishments under the same owner or businesses of 3,000 or more square feet. Stone explains that this way the small businesses will not be affected, because they are not the main source of the problem. Combined they contribute only twenty-five percent of the number of plastic bags distributed by the seven largest stores in Plymouth.

While other disposable options might be helpful for that sake of convenience, it is important to reduce the amount of disposable material people use in order to reduce waste. “The environmental advocacy group Envirowise estimates that eighty percent of the products [people] use are discarded after a single use” (Horn 92). Consumers need to step away from this disposable addiction and to consciously try to switch to reusable items to help the environment by reducing waste. Stone explains that eventually people will switch over from using paper to habitually opting for reusable bags. The consensus is that people tend to be hesitant to change what they are used to. People want change but they don’t want to have to change. The average person isn’t conscious of the amount of waste they contribute or the environmental consequences if they aren’t being inconvenienced in the process. By educating people about the negative effects of plastic bags, at the rate this movement is spreading, soon the entire state, and eventually the whole country, will be plastic-bag-free.

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Sleep and Dreams: A Cognitive State

In the everyday lives of all individuals, life is a singular and methodical continuity. Human beings live their lives through the same collective form of consciousness. This collectively average consciousness shared through most humans is, therefore, the fundamental factor in a human's state of being. Moreover, there are intermittent occasions of humans achieving a state of being that falls outside of the average collective consciousness. These altered states of consciousness come in a variety of forms. The ingestion of hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD (D-Lysergic Acid Diethylamide), altering one's relationship with their environs through meditation, and making one enter a suggestible and trance-like state through hypnosis are all examples of these altered states of consciousness. However, the primary form of achieving an altered state of consciousness is experienced by all healthy human beings when they sleep. Sleep is, by a large margin, the primary method for humans to achieve an altered state of consciousness, but is also a complicated and paradoxical characteristic of both the physiological and psychological human being.

On an average day in a human's life, wakefulness is determined by the sun rising and sleep is determined by the sun setting. A human's day is defined so deeply by the rise and fall of the sun that a biological process has evolved in the human psyche and physique in accordance with the sun. This developed system is called the Circadian Rhythm (circa meaning around and diem meaning day), and is defined as "a cycle that is connected with the 24-hour period of the Earth's rotation" (Rathus 96). Commonly referred to as the biological clock, the Circadian Rhythm ushers in the sensation of drowsiness and ultimately sleep. For centuries, little was known about this mysterious state. However, innovative scientific technology developed in the past century has allowed for the collecting of empirical data concerning sleep, which has revolutionized how sleep is understood in the scientific and philosophical communities.

In the early 1900s, a groundbreaking method of reading brain waves, EEG (Electroencephalography), was developed in which several electronic sensors are placed on a patient's scalp. These electrodes record the amplitude and frequency of

the patient's brain waves, even identifying the type of waves, while they are sleeping. It has been determined that the waking mind utilizes beta waves, which have a low amplitude but high frequency, meaning that the mind is highly active. Drowsiness instead utilizes higher amplitude and lower frequency, meaning that mind activity begins to slow down significantly. Once the patient of the EEG falls asleep, analysis of the sleeping mind has triggered the discovery that sleep consists of five separate stages with different amplitudes and frequencies.

The five stages of sleep are split into two sets: NREM (Non-rapid Eye Movement) and REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. Upon falling asleep, NREM comprises the first four stages of sleep. The first stage transitions from the low-frequency drowsiness into even lower- frequency theta and delta waves. As the four NREM stages transition from theta waves to lower frequency delta waves and the frequency of brain waves diminishes, the patient falls deeper into a lower state of brain activity. Then, the brain waves suddenly revert into low frequency theta waves, revealing the final and fifth stage of sleep. As the five stages of sleep are repeated over the course of the sleeping period, REM sleep is entered several times a night. This stage of the sleeping cycle produces dreaming, and is the stage of sleeping crucial to a healthy night of rest. Interrupted REM sleep results in an altering of the sleep cycle and stages so that REM occurs out of sequence, jumbling the healthy and gradual drop in brain wave frequency. This empirical data raised the study of sleep into a science, causing an upsurge in studies and research on sleep.

Concerning sleep's origins, well-supported theories have been made with no one utterly proven derivation. Of the numerous theories, there are three focal theoretical functional origins of sleep: the preservation of energy, maintaining brain productivity, and the restoration of cells. Sleep is defined as "a rapidly reversible state of immobility with a greatly reduced sensory responsiveness. The rapid reversibility distinguishes sleep from coma or hibernation" (Lockley and Foster 41). Just as hibernation and comas are entered as functions to care for the body, sleep is no different. Sleep theoretically is expedient for energy preservation, implying that sleep theoretically originated from a need to diminish taxing energy demands. Additionally, sleep aids the brain in recalibrating its own efficiency, which suggests that sleep evolved from a need to consolidate what has been learned and put into memory. Finally, sleep rapidly assists in the restoration of cells,

particularly during healing. Therefore, sleep could also derive from a need to repair integral components at the cellular level. Counterbalancing these advantageous functions, sleep deprivation can result in severely negative physiological and psychological effects.

All humans require sleep to have a functional and healthy life, and this requirement changes as they age. Infants sleep an average of 16 hours a day, while adults sleep 8 hours and the elderly sleep 5.5 hours per day (Lockley and Foster 48). However, if a human is deprived of a healthy amount of time to sleep, there are several consequences. Drowsiness emerges, and can quickly cause one deprived of sleep to suddenly fall asleep, which could be life-threatening. Those who are commonly deprived of sleep are more likely to develop mood fluctuations, anxiety, and depression (Rathus). Sleep deprivation is also known to impair motor and cognitive performance, as well as memory and concentration, which would be corrected by a full night of rest according to the theory that sleep functions to positively impact brain efficiency.

The main functions of sleeping takes place during the REM stage of sleep, including dreaming. Dreams are a complicated function of sleep, and what is known about dreaming is largely data-driven conjecture. Dreaming can only be categorized by its content and form. Emotional salience (i.e. relevance) comprises most of the content of dreams, as one's sense of reality in dreams is entirely driven by the strength of their feelings and thoughts. During a dream, the dreamer's state of being remains the same, but their predispositions blend with a false reality to create a delusional dream world comparable to a hallucination. It is the nature of dream content to be delusional, and not to comply with the basic laws of the waking world. "These are the cardinal cognitive features of dreaming: loss of self-reflective awareness; loss of orientational stability; loss of directed thought; reduction in logical reasoning; and, last but not least, poor memory both within and after the dream" (Hobson 5).

Dreaming maintains similar content while varying in form. Dreams are rarely anything more than an inane jumble of events and notions; however, there are two variations that exist and can be elicited. Nightmares are hostile and frightening dreams that are well remembered over normal dreams due to their traumatic nature. These nightmares can be caused by several factors. Eating before sleeping is causal in the activation of the metabolism and stimulates the brain. This state of an active mind and metabolism

is a stimulus for nightmares. In addition, anxiety or stress is the most common cause of nightmares, and usually is apparent in the content of the nightmare (Hobson).

The rarest form of the dream is lucid dreaming, which the average person achieves only rarely in a lifetime. Lucid dreaming is a state of being aware that one is dreaming, while being able to make conscious decisions within the dream, and even control the dream. There are multitudes of skeptics regarding lucid dreaming, even though many have reported to have experienced lucid dreams. The realization that one is in a dream likely stems from the dreamer being unable to physically touch the real world. In some tests, dreaming patients grasp at their sheets and bed, but find themselves unable to feel them in the dream world (Bootzin et al. 109). Alternatively, the dreamer experiences something bizarre enough to go beyond their delusions and signal that it cannot possibly be reality. Therefore, they conclude that they are dreaming, and the lucid nature of the dream begins. This is extremely rare, however. LaBerge paraphrases himself and Gackenbach: “Though most people report having had a lucid dream at least once in their lives, only about 20% of the population reports having lucid dreams once a month or more” (qtd. in Bootzin et al. 109). Further empirical data have confirmed that what is described as lucid dreaming occurs during REM stages of sleep, giving validity to what has until recently been considered fringe science.

Dreams and sleep are both integral physiologically and socially in human life. The common conjecture of dreams is that they are the consequence of the subconscious translating itself into the conscious mind through dreams. Dreams are commonly thought of as emblematic of the subconscious mind. Sigmund Freud famously theorized about dreams, writing, “the dream is the liberation of the spirit from the pressure of external nature, a detachment of the soul from the fetters of matter” (Freud 3). As the sleeping process benefits the body in the healing of cells, the recalibration of the mind, and the conservation of energy, dreaming is a key psychological function as well. In conclusion, dreaming is the method by which the subconscious brain brings clarity and introspection to the conscious being through an altered state of mind.

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On the Granter of Victory: Constantine

In the ancient Roman Empire, few emperors were as influential as Constantine the Great, who was the first Emperor of the Roman Empire to declare publicly that he was a follower of the Christian faith. Constantine ruled as emperor from 306 to 337 AD, during and after the Great Persecution of Christians. Emperor Constantine is commonly known for proliferating and protecting the beliefs of Christians during his reign, and is credited with transforming the status of Christians from an illegal and detested cult into the majority faith of Rome. However, the cause of Constantine being both the emperor of Rome and the self-proclaimed granter of victory for the Christians was a result of the greater effect Christianity had over him throughout his life compared to that of the Imperial pagan cults.

If one is to have an accurate understanding of Constantine's actions, one must analyze his youth to understand the future of the forthcoming emperor of Rome. Constantine was the son of Constantius Chlorus, a military leader in the eastern Roman Empire, and Helena. Constantius Chlorus was, like all desirable citizens of the Roman Empire in the eyes of the law, a practitioner of the Imperial cult in both public and private worship. However, during the later reign of Constantine, a controversy surrounding his parents emerged, as they were not married during the time of his conception. This, therefore, indicated that Constantine was their illegitimate child. Bearing a child out of wedlock went against the way of both Roman Paganism and Christianity. However, these imperfections were implicit in Constantius' faith as he had unmarried relations with a woman who was likely a Christian, a faith of which he was tolerant in an otherwise intolerant society. Christianity was at the time forbidden and punishable by torture and death.

The evidence that Helena was a follower of the Christian faith lies in her youth and in the handling of her burial after her demise. Before Constantine was born, Helena lived through a great plague between 251 and 266 AD. This plague claimed many lives, including Emperor Claudius Gothicus, a man whom Constantine and his followers would claim as a distant relation. This fiction was invented to help consolidate Constantine's power in Rome

after his ascension (Stephenson). Helena, born in 250 AD, grew up with this plague and witnessed firsthand the lives it claimed and the agonizing and ghastly symptoms that came with it. However, Helena saw that it was the Christian population of the city, not the Roman pagans who fled the plague, who fought against it. The Christians embraced the risk of contracting the plague and dying without fear, adhering to their idealism of martyrdom and self-sacrifice (Stephenson). This early and traumatic exposure to the bravery expected of Christianity is corroborated by Helena's relationship with Lucian of Antioch, a Christian man whom she had favored. Upon Helena's passing, the body of Lucian of Antioch was moved to her resting place, as he had been one of the many Christians martyred during the great persecution of Christians under the reign of Emperor Diocletian. This evidence of Helena favoring a Christian martyr who was executed before the Roman Empire embraced Christianity suggests that she had secretly embraced the faith before Constantine, and played a pivotal role in his accession of the Christian faith.

Constantine was born in 272 AD and lived with Constantius and Helena during the reign of two emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, which would evolve into a tetrarchy later in Constantine's youth (Stephenson). Constantine's father, Constantius, was elevated to be the Praetorian Prefect (one of the highest ranks achieved by a Roman officer) and was given the province of Dalmatia to govern by Emperor Maximian. Constantius, now in a position of greater authority, arranged a divorce from Helena and sent her and young Constantine away to join the court of Emperor Diocletian, one of the Great Persecutors. Constantius joined the members of the Great Persecutors as well, persecuting the faith of which Helena, who had been Constantius' wife and mother to his children, belonged (Eusebius of Caesarea).

Now in the court of Emperor Diocletian, Constantine witnessed firsthand the Diocletian Persecution. In the accounts of the Great Persecution of Christians, the Greek-born scholar and writer Eusebius of Caesarea wrote of the tortures, declarations of guilt, and final moments of many Christians. An example of these martyrs involves Alphaeus and Zacchaeus, two Christians who humbly admitted their faith and accepted their deaths. Of these two Christian martyrs, after enduring torture for days, Eusebius recounted,

He commanded them to offer sacrifice to the emperors: but they confessed, and said, We acknowledge one God only, the

supreme sovereign of all; and when they had uttered these words in the presence of all the people they were numbered among the company of Holy Martyrs, and were crowned as glorious and illustrious combatants in the conflict of God, for whose sake also their heads were cut off. (Eusebius of Caesarea)

These two men died of torture and decapitation, a fate that thousands of Christians would endure during the Great Persecution of Diocletian. Constantine stood witness to a myriad of executions, and was well aware of the torture of Christians. However, Constantine was also exposed early to the bravery that came with Christian martyrdom, much like his mother Helena had been.

When he grew into adulthood, Constantine rose to become Emperor of the northern lands of Britannia in a tetrarchy alongside his father Constantius. It is during this time that the number of Christians in the Roman Empire increased drastically, regardless of the laws against the faith (Stephenson). Christians could be found in many walks of life in the Roman Empire, including the military. Another emperor of Rome that Constantine ruled with was Maximian, who had been co-ruler with Diocletian when Constantine was young. Emperor Maximian, who had become Constantine's father-in-law, felt threatened by Constantine's growth in power in the northern regions. Maximian bribed many of Constantine's own soldiers to betray and murder their leader. Constantine barely survived this attempt on his life. He retaliated with a campaign to unite the Roman Empire under one Emperor, causing a civil war against Emperor Maximian and his son Maxentius (Stephenson).

In the Roman Empire, paganism was a core element of the government and military. The Imperial military used standards that were unique to each army or legion. Stephenson wrote of these Roman military standards, "but the loyalty of each soldier had to be beyond question, to the emperor, to the state and to his unit. [...] but placing at the centre of the celebration the objects most revered by the army – military standards" (Stephenson 19). These standards were in relation to their own guardian spirit, called the *genius*, which would protect and bring them victory in battle. These spirits were always one of the pagan gods of the Imperial cults, such as Jupiter, Juno, or Minerva. However, before launching his final assault against Maximian and Maxentius of Rome in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Constantine sought to use the standard that had the greatest effect. Constantine alleged that when he prayed for the aid of what he called the *summus deus*,

or greatest god, he had a vision in the sky of a cross surrounded by light and words alongside the cross that read "By this sign you will conquer" (Stephenson). Constantine took this as a sign that the Christian God was the greatest god, and took up the Chi-Rho symbol as his army's military standard. This was partly allowed to occur due to the growing numbers of Christians in the Roman military. The symbol Chi-Rho is the combination of the first two characters in the Greek spelling of Christ (Stephenson).

The Battle of the Milvian Bridge ended in the retreat of Maxentius' forces across a temporary bridge. When the bridge collapsed, Maxentius and most of his fleeing army drowned in the river. Constantine would later seize Maximian, who fled from Rome to France. Constantine ordered his betrayer, who had been his father-in-law, to commit suicide. At this time, Constantine was uneducated regarding the Christian ways of forgiveness, and wished nothing but vengeance upon his nemesis. Once Maxentius and Maximian were defeated, Constantine ascended to become Emperor of Rome (Stephenson). Lactantius, an early Christian writer, accounted that, "As soon as he took on the imperial power, Constantine Augustus did nothing before returning the Christians to their cult and their God. This was the first decision: the restoration of this holy religion" (qtd. by Ramelli 65). The first priority for Constantine was to keep the Christians, to whom he publicly attributed his victory, in mind (Ramelli).

As Emperor Constantine grew older and transformed the Christians into the majority religion of the Roman Empire, he would become known as the one who was the granter of victory, which is in fact the contrary of the truth. Were it not for the already exponential growth in population of Christians in the Empire, Constantine would have accrued significantly fewer supporters. Constantine's self-view evolved to be this Victor of the Christians, which in fact stemmed from a guilty conscience, having watched the Great Diocletian Persecution (Stephenson). This desire to redeem the Christians to victory was self-fulfilled during his reign. Of this personal view Constantine had of himself, Stephenson writes that in an oration by Constantine himself, the emperor observed, "that the citizens of Rome have witnessed the triumph of the Christian god, still the granter of victory, through Constantine" (Stephenson 172). The words of Constantine allude to his self-view of being a second champion of God, following Jesus of Nazareth, with a destiny to bring victory to Christianity. This perceived destiny is causal in his adoption of

his Christian name, Victor Constantine.

During his rule, Constantine reigned as a tolerant and benevolent Emperor who wielded an overwhelmingly powerful military force. Constantine ended the persecution of the Christians that had plagued his youth. He fulfilled what he perceived as his destiny as God's granter of victory, and by the end of his reign Christianity would overtake Roman Paganism, which faded into obscurity in comparison to the widespread Christian beliefs. Victor Constantine managed, also, to avoid the prejudices his father, Constantius Chlorus. Constantine favored his mother's beliefs, and his favor of his mother was publicized after her death. Stephenson notes what occurred after the death of Constantine's mother Helena: "In January 328 Constantine renamed Drepanium in Bithynia, the city of his mother's birth, Helenopolis, 'City of Helena'" (Stephenson 279). Constantine's upbringing with Helena defined much of his life and decisions as Emperor.

Constantine was an entirely different emperor than his father Constantius Chlorus had been. Analyzing the works of the Greek writer Libanius, Wiemer writes that "[Libanius] draws a clear distinction between Constantine who confined himself to stripping the temples of their wealth, and Constantius, who had temples destroyed" (Wiemer 522). Victor Constantine, though blatantly favoring Christianity over Roman Paganism, was not bloodthirsty against rival religions as his father had been. Constantine's close relationship with his mother was undoubtedly fundamental in this. His legacy of religious tolerance, and the favoring of Christianity, transformed the attitude towards Christianity in the Roman Empire. However, Emperor Victor Constantine died, leaving behind his legacy. Though Constantine was given a traditional apotheosis ceremony to become a *divi*, or deified Emperor, by the Roman Pagans, he was given a proper Christian burial beforehand on his own orders (Stephenson). Stephenson wrote of the postmortem rites of Victor Constantine, explaining that, "Constantine 'was accorded the place he earnestly desired alongside the monument to the apostles.' That is, he was buried in a mausoleum he had prepared for himself in Constantinople" (Stephenson 280). Constantine was raised by a Christian, fought as the granter of victory to Christians, and until his last day held to the Christian ideology that he had seen in his beloved mother.

In conclusion, Constantine is defined by the people and experiences of his youth. His near-ostracism from his father to live

with Helena in a far-off province was resultant in his contempt for his father's prejudiced beliefs. Helena, a Christian, raised Constantine and was the source of his early exposure to the rising faith. Living in the court of Diocletian revealed to Constantine the grim fate that Christians met at the hands of the Roman pagans. However, Constantine also observed the courage in the Christian martyrs, who met their ends with peace and humility. Constantine, when he saw that the Christian God gave him victory over his nemesis Maximian, likely felt that he owed the Christians, the minority faith his people had once persecuted, for his success. In the end, these elements of Constantine's early life are all causal in his status as having been both emperor of Rome and granter of victory for the Christian people.

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Let the Music Take Control

What if the hokey pokey really is what it's all about? Music has been a form of personal enjoyment for decades. It is an art that has proven to bring people joy and hope, and has touched all elements of emotion. Music is commonly used in therapy and can also have an effect on memory. Music affects stress level and is beneficial with respect to Long-Term Memory (LTM).

Many studies have shown that music and memory are strongly linked to triggering memories, aiding in learning, and even helping people who have had accidents to retrieve information. In many cases music helps the brain retrieve information from its LTM store. In this process music plays a beneficial role in memory retention and recall (Cady et al.). Music improves the brain by affecting the way people think and problem-solve.

Mapping has been conducted on the impact of musical training on the brain. Writer and neurologist Oliver Sacks explored how the brain reacts to music. A team of neuroscientists at Columbia University designed a test that would reveal if the brain of Dr. Sacks loves Bach as much as he does. He was attached to a device to rate his emotions, while at the same time a scan recorded the activity of his brain. He was presented with two pieces, one by Bach and one by Beethoven. Concluding the test, Dr. Sacks was asked how music affected him. His response was that Bach blew him away, but that Beethoven left him flat. The results of the scan confirmed his feelings. Unlike Beethoven, Bach activated his brain's amygdala, which is vital to processing emotions (Sacks).

Music proves to be useful in brain development and the way people perceive the world. Playing and listening to music engages all parts of the brain. It increases brain functions, such as the ability to think and process information. By using Short-Term Memory (STM) to make sense of words and rhythm patterns, humans are constantly exercising brain development. In six months, people who received piano lessons showed a more robust gain in memory, verbal fluency, the speed at which they process information, planning ability, and other cognitive functions, compared with those who had not received lessons (National Geographic).

Music reduces stress. It is commonly seen that most lovers of the musical world share a calm, happy persona. Stress does not build the way it does in people who have no music in their lives (Thoma et al.). When someone is driving in their car and they turn on the radio to listen to music, how is that person feeling? Are they stressed? Overwhelmed? Bombarded with a variety of errands and tasks? No, not usually. They are typically in a good mood. Stress can affect grades, jobs, and health. Listening to even moments of music can help a person see their emotional state from a new perspective. People who have lived to be very old often give credit to music. Music has become a key part of their lives; it is inside of them. Music is full of meaning and full of life. The healing properties of music are one of a kind to many and the effects are almost always positive (Klemm).

Stress and memory are two different functions in a person's body; however, they both can be affected with exposure to music. Music can improve brain function, mental processing and the ability to handle stress effectively (Klemm).

The alphabet song is one that most people have learned and it has stuck with them all through their lives. Educators are now using music as a tool for learning in the classroom in subjects such as math and foreign languages. What happens is that music embeds information in the brain, which makes it easier to remember and retrieve. A study by Ludke, Ferreira, and Overy found evidence that singing can facilitate phrase learning in an unfamiliar language (National Geographic). This study used sixty adults to speak in rhythmic song using Hungarian words. After a period of time the adults who used music to learn were able to recall the words and sing them back to the study group with remarkable results. Therefore, methods once used only in elementary schools have found a way into adult learning with great success (Klemm).

Responding to the fact that so many students listen to music when studying, formal experiments were recently conducted to explore whether or not that is a good practice. These experiments, conducted in Finland, followed a scientific rationale. Prior research had shown that listening to music that people considered pleasurable increased the release of dopamine in the brain, and dopamine is a well-known "feel good" neurotransmitter. Other research had shown that dopamine promotes learning as a reward, while a deficiency of dopamine promotes learning as punishment (Klemm).

On another note, music has long been recognized as an

effective form of therapy to provide an outlet for emotions. There is growing scientific evidence showing that the brain responds to music in specific ways. Playing music for children during painful medical procedures is a simple intervention that can make a big difference. Music can help adult patients, too. Researchers at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Singapore found that patients in palliative care who took part in live music therapy sessions reported relief from persistent pain. Music therapists worked closely with patients to individually tailor the intervention, and patients took part in singing, instrument playing, lyric discussion, and even song writing as they worked toward accepting an illness or weighed end-of-life issues. Active music engagement allowed the patients to reconnect with the healthy parts of themselves, even in the face of a debilitating condition or disease-related suffering (Novotney). Research suggests that listening to or singing music can provide emotional and behavioral benefits for people with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. Musical memories are often preserved in Alzheimer's disease because key brain areas linked to musical memory are relatively undamaged by the disease. For example, music can relieve stress, reduce anxiety and distress, lightening the mood and providing a way to connect with loved ones who have Alzheimer's disease—especially those who have difficulty communicating (Graff-Radford).

At its core, music is sound, and sound is rooted in vibration. Led by Lee Bartel, a music professor at the University of Toronto, several researchers are exploring whether sound vibrations absorbed through the body can help ease symptoms of Parkinson's disease, fibromyalgia, and depression. Known as vibroacoustic therapy, the intervention involves using low frequency sound – similar to a low rumble – to produce vibrations that are applied directly to the body. During this vibroacoustic therapy, the patient lies on a mat or bed or sits on a chair embedded with speakers that transmit vibrators at specific computer-generated frequencies that can be heard and felt (Aube et al.) In 2009, researchers led by Lauren K. King of the Sun Life Financial Movement Disorders Research and Rehabilitation Center at Wilfred Laurier University, in Waterloo, Ontario, found that short-term use of vibroacoustic therapy with Parkinson's disease patients led to improvements in symptoms, including less rigidity and better walking speed with bigger steps and reduced tremors (Novotney). Lee Bartel believes that since rhythmic pulses of music can stabilize disorientation, low-frequency sound might also help with these conditions.

Dru Sunderman, Professional Voice Coach at Cape Cod Conservatory in Hyannis, Massachusetts explains that music is something magical. The crazy thing about music is that there's so much out there that there's literally something for every mood imaginable. There's music to calm people down, and music to put them in an ethereal state. Some music pumps people up, music that simply serves to take away silence, and music that takes away the listener's breath momentarily. Music must be felt, and feeling it can lead to many desirable results.

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American Policy Failure Regarding Jewish Refugees During WWII

Although American soldiers, alongside Allied forces, fought to end World War II and the Holocaust, American policy failed to adequately assist Jewish refugees. Fear, politics, and willful failure to act all factored into the American government's measured response. Until the establishment of the War Refugee Board in January 1944, reports document the United States government engaged in a coordinated effort to keep Jewish refugees out of America. Still, after the establishment of the War Board, reports document outright refusal to act.

The term refugee was first used to refer to the French Huguenots, a group fleeing religious persecution in France. Initially, countries did not want them to settle within their borders, fearing it could lead to war with France. However, later refugees would become the cause of fear, "With the rise of anarchism at the turn of the 20th century, there were unfounded fears that anarchists would pose as refugees to enter countries to engage in violence" (Orchard). Although unfounded, these fears persisted in the American public.

During the events preceding World War II, America was recovering from the Great Depression and the additional Recession of 1937. Once the War started, mass migration across Europe began, with large numbers applying for visas in the United States and elsewhere. On May 13, 1939, a group of mostly German-Jewish immigrants boarded the *S.S. St. Louis*, embarking towards Cuba. Once turned away from Cuba, due to the vessel carrying 937 refugees, it was closely followed by United States Coast Guard boats and planes. After being turned away from Florida, the refugees then settled across Europe; however, more than a quarter died during Hitler's "Final Solution" (United States Holocaust Museum).

Fearing that these immigrants could become dependent on the government, State Department officials received a memo, dated June 26, 1940, regarding proper handling of immigrant visa applications:

We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period

of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative devices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas. However, this could only be temporary. In order to make it more definite It would have to be done by suspension of the rules under the law by the issuance of a proclamation of emergency--which I take it we are not yet ready to proclaim. (Long)

These were not the only fears the government and citizens harbored towards Jewish refugees. Many believed Jewish refugees could be easily coerced into spying for Germany in order to protect their families. This fear was held by many, including President Roosevelt. In his journal, Assistant Secretary of State Long stated,

The President expressed himself as in entire accord with the policy which would exclude persons about whom there was any suspicion that they would be inimical to the welfare of the United States no matter who had vouchsafed for them and irrespective of their financial or other standing. (Israel)

After the arrest of Herbert Karl Friedrich Bahr, a 28-year-old German-Jewish refugee for espionage in 1942, this idea was validated in the eyes of many. He bragged about attending a spy school in Germany, and was unapologetic during his trial. President Roosevelt himself believed this as well. "Not all of them are voluntary spies," Roosevelt said. "It is rather a horrible story, but in some of the other countries that refugees out of Germany have gone to, especially Jewish refugees, they found a number of definitely proven spies" (Gross). These unfounded beliefs were also perpetuated by FBI propaganda films, and other government departments during the War. For example, the American Ambassador to France, William Bullitt, incorrectly stated that more than half the spies caught conducting espionage against the French Army were Jewish refugees.

By 1942, the United States was fully aware of Adolph Hitler's plan to exterminate all people of Jewish ancestry in German-controlled territory. Still, however, the State Department used national security interests as reasoning for denying refugee status. After becoming aware of the State Department's lack of action, the Treasury Department summarized the following in a January report to President Roosevelt:

I am convinced on the basis of the information which is

available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy, have been guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler. (Paul)

The Treasury Department became aware of these failures after the State Department failed to act on a plan of action eleven weeks after it was brought to the department. Once becoming aware of this delay, the US Treasury Department immediately issued the required licenses, and began to look into other failures to act by the State Department.

During March 1943, delegates from the State Department were sent to speak with British delegates, regarding the refugee crisis. However, they were sent with explicit instructions from the State Department to get little done. Once there, the delegates agreed, “The refugee problem should not be considered as being confined to persons of any particular race or faith. Nazi measures against minorities have caused the flights of persons of various races and faiths” (Memorandum).

Executive Order 9417, which established the War Refugee Board, was signed on January 22, 1944, just three days after receiving the Treasury Department report, outlining internal intentional negligence. It was tasked with protecting and attempting to rescue as many in danger as they possibly could. Nevertheless, poor timing helped in making it ineffective, as it was created at the end of World War II. The help given by the board was a case of too little, too late. Nevertheless, the creation of this board did help in the rescue of around 200,000 refugees, including many who were non-Jewish. In particular, with the Swedish government’s assistance, the War Refugee Board, under the leadership of Raoul Wallenberg, rented buildings across Hungary. Jewish refugees who were about to be sent to concentration camps were placed under Swedish diplomatic protection, saving over twenty thousand lives.

After the scale of mass-murder at Auschwitz Death camps became known during July of 1944, the United States War Department began to receive calls to bomb railways and crematoria, in an attempt to stop the genocide. However, the War Department operated on an undeclared policy of not acting in the aid of refugees, and stated that defeating the Axis powers was what would ultimately save them. Specifically, when asked to bomb Auschwitz, it was claimed that “the target is beyond the maximum

range of medium bombardment, dive bombers and fighter bombers located in United Kingdom, France, or Italy” (McCloy). This statement was not true, as factories at Auschwitz were bombed after less than a month, and again three weeks later.

Executive Order 9147, when created, included the War Department. In spite of this, the War Department contributed almost nothing to the aide of refugees, claiming “at the present critical stage of the war in Europe, our strategic air forces are engaged in the destruction of industrial target systems vital to the dwindling war potential of the enemy, from which they should not be diverted” (McCloy).

American Policy, State Department interference, and fear all played a part in America’s failure of the Jewish refugees. At the end of the Treasury report given to President Roosevelt, it states:

Unless remedial steps of a drastic nature are taken, and taken immediately, I am certain that no effective action will be taken by this government to prevent the complete extermination of the Jews in German controlled Europe, and that this Government will have to share for all time responsibility for this extermination. (Paul)

For a large portion of the Second World War, the United States largely ignored the plight of the Jewish people in Europe. The United States State Department failed in carrying out its directive, actively keeping Jewish refugees out of this country, exemplified by the case of the *S.S. St. Louis*, and the nine hundred and thirty-seven passengers sent back to Europe, where one in four died.

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“Drown” by Junot Diaz: A Short Fiction Journal Entry

“Drown” by Junot Diaz is a short story about a young Dominican American man named Yuniór. As the story begins, he is reflecting on the relationship between himself and a longtime friend, Beto, who is briefly visiting home after being away at college. Yuniór has two difficult yet quiet internal struggles. The first is that his life is stagnant. He lives in an apartment with his mother in a New Jersey barrio. He doesn’t have a legitimate job and instead deals drugs to locals, including teens. Another internal issue is that Yuniór has mixed feelings about Beto. Yuniór and Beto shared two sexually intimate, yet unresolved, experiences.

Throughout the story Yuniór seems to just be going through the motions of life, and although unhappy with his situation, doesn’t make plans to change. The news that Beto is in town both reenergizes and angers him. Yuniór quickly checks on places Beto may be, hoping to run into him.

Yuniór’s mother is a very quiet sad person, a reflection of his future self. She still pines for her ex-husband, who abandoned her yet periodically calls her for money. She either ignores the fact that her son is a drug dealer, doesn’t know, or doesn’t care. She mentions Yuniór’s father several times in an unfavorable light, as a man who abandoned his wife and family, and now lives with another woman in Florida.

“Drown” is richly descriptive, especially the scenes in the local pool--the sign, the voices using Spanish slang--the reader can almost smell the chlorine. The tone and subject matter are serious. Not living up to his full potential, feeling unhappiness in his mundane life, and having lost friendship, I believe Yuniór is hiding his desires and ashamed of not living up to his full potential. He doesn’t want to face his possible attraction to Beto because of his self-image and hyper-masculine beliefs, and also feels deflated because he is still living in the same town, being the oldest one at the pool and still selling drugs.

There are many definitions of the word “drown.” One meaning is “to drive out (as a sensation or idea).” Another is “to suffocate by submersion, especially in water.” Also these other two definitions: “to engage oneself deeply and strenuously,” and “to cause a sound not to be heard by making a loud noise.” Yuniór

at one point in the story is physically being drowned (playfully) by Beto, but throughout the story he's emotionally drowning himself.

Instructor's Note: This submission is written as a journal entry, not an analytical essay. Thus, it is less formal in organization and tone. It represents one of the steps in class as students move forward in the process of composing literary analysis and criticism.

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Poems of Love

The concept of love is a vital part of all cultures; it can be found in endless numbers of stories, songs, movies, poetry, and other forms of art. By comparing the poems “Love Poem” by John Frederick Nims and “Living in Sin” by Adrienne Rich, a distinct contrast can be observed in the way that love is portrayed. Nims’ poem portrays a love that is strong and healthy, whereas Rich’s poem depicts a relationship that is weak and lifeless.

In “Love Poem” Nims depicts a relationship that is strong and filled with love by using the flaws and strengths of the speaker’s lover to express the speaker’s ability to love her for who she is. The poem starts off with the following lines:

My clumsiest dear, whose hands shipwreck vases,
At whose quick touch all glasses chip and ring,
Whose palms are bulls in china, burs in linen,
And have no cunning with any soft thing. (1-4)

These lines detail a flaw in her character by informing the reader of her clumsiness. Nims uses terms such as “shipwreck,” “bulls,” and “quick touch” to describe someone with a rough and careless touch. Combined with the use of words that the reader would associate with fragile objects such as “vases,” “china,” and “glass,” Nims emphasizes the clumsiness of the girl in the poem. In the third stanza he also details another flaw, which is her lack of depth perception:

Unpredictable dear, the taxi drivers’ terror,
Shrinking from far headlights pale as a dime
Yet leaping before apoplectic streetcars—
Misfit in any space. And never on time. (9-12)

Her lack of depth perception is detailed when the speaker says that she will become nervous when a car is far away, but at the same time she has the habit of dashing across the street in front of oncoming cars (Adams).

In the second stanza, instead of discussing his lover’s clumsiness or lack of depth perception, he expresses a positive trait that she has which is her ability to calm people.

Accept all ill-at-ease fidgeting people:
The refugee uncertain at the door
You make at home; deftly you steady
The drunk clambering on his undulant floor. (5-8)

These lines describe that her personality is a warm and inviting one, and that she can lighten up a room because they reveal her ability to comfort anyone who feels uncomfortable or unsure. The description of both her unattractive and attractive personality traits shows that the speaker is able to love her despite her weaknesses and would not ask for anything more. This love is also shown in the last stanza of the poem.

Be with me, darling, early and late. Smash glasses--
I will study wry music for your sake.
For should your hands drop white and empty
All the toys of the world would break. (21-24)

Nims shows that the speaker accepts his lover's flaws as part of who she is in the first line when the he asks her to smash glasses, which he considers to be music to his ears (Adams). Nims further expresses the narrator's love through the speaker's claim that "all the toys of the world would break" (24) if she were to die. The toys are used as a symbol of the joy that the narrator's lover provides him, so if the toys broke, the speaker's life would be joyless and meaningless (Adams). The love that is depicted in this poem is strong because rather than hating her for her clumsiness, the speaker loves her endlessly and sees that her imperfections are what make her attractive to him.

Not all relationships are perfect and at times they can be weak and on the verge of snapping at any moment. This is exemplified in Rich's poem "Living in Sin," where she describes an unhappy and bland relationship between a woman and her lover. Rich describes the girl's aspirations regarding what she hoped the relationship would be in the first two lines of the poem: "She had thought the studio would keep itself;/ no dust upon the furniture of love." Her expectations of the studio staying clean is an example of her naïve assumption that while in love everything would be perfect and she would not be burdened with the trouble of cleaning the studio (Robinson). Also, Rich uses the words "no dust upon the furniture of love" with the furniture of love representing the relationship, to show the girl's hope that her love would be full of

life and active. Hence, nothing is dusty, since dust accumulates on anything that is not being used on a regular basis. If the relationship is active, then there should be no accumulation of “dust” upon it. These two lines introduce the girl’s fantasies about what life would be like when living with her lover, and allows the reader to compare this introduction to the rest of the poem. For instance, in lines 14 and 15 Rich describes a bug infestation in the studio she lives in with her lover. “A pair of beetle-eyes would fix her own---/ envoy from some village in the moldings.” The dirty studio and the bug infestation provide an image of a less-than-ideal living area and indicates that the studio is not clean at all, in effect providing a very different reality than what the girl had dreamed her life would be like. The idea of the “furniture of love” not being covered in dust can also be compared to the description of her lover.

Meanwhile, he, with a yawn,
sounded a dozen notes upon the keyboard,
declared it out of tune, shrugged at the mirror,
rubbed at his beard, went out for cigarettes. (16-19)

Rather than portraying a compelling description of the man she is in love with, the lines reveal a man who seems to be “preoccupied, uninterested, and self-absorbed” (Robinson). This unattractive representation of him is assisted in part by the lack of positive and loving words. The absence of affectionate words gives the reader the idea that he is not a “knight in shining armor” so to speak (Robinson). By comparing this characterization to her hope of an active relationship, a vivid contrast can be observed because she dreamed of having a lover who is engaged and deeply in love with her. However, she ends up with a man who pays no attention to her and is described as a self-absorbed slob, who seems to complain about the problems of the studio without fixing them. The poor condition of the relationship that is developed throughout the poem can also be seen in the last few lines. “She woke sometimes to feel the daylight coming/ like a relentless milkman up the stairs” (25-26). The use of the word “relentless” to compare the arrival of the milkman to the morning gives the reader the impression that the girl dreads the coming day. This impression is formed because the word relentless is usually used to describe an action or event that is annoying because it never ends. By using this word to represent the daytime, Rich implies that the girl dreads her lifestyle and does not wish to wake up (Robinson).

Also looking deeper into these lines, it can be observed that when she is sleeping, she is dreaming and living her dream of a perfect life, but when she wakes up, she is forced to face the reality of her situation, which is a lover who pays no attention to her, and a poorly kept studio infested with bugs. When compared to the opening lines of the poem, the rest of the poem reveals a deteriorating and dying love through details of her lover and the studio.

“Living in Sin” and “Love Poem” contain many distinct differences that can be pointed out ranging from the tone to meaning. The most important difference is the meaning of the two poems. For example, “Love Poem” is about a man who loves his girlfriend or wife despite all her flaws and finds a way to accept and appreciate those flaws. Nims portrays a strong relationship by detailing the faults and perfections of the girl that the poem is addressed to and expressing the speaker’s admiration for her. However, “Living in Sin” tells the story of a dying relationship, failed aspirations of what love was wished to be, and the reality that not everything works out as one hopes. Rich uses the aspects of a girl’s dreams and the reality of her relationship to develop this meaning. The tone of the two poems is another significant difference. In “Love Poem” maintains a light-hearted and tender tone. The light-hearted tone is developed by Nims through the speaker’s exaggeration of her faults such as her “shipwrecking vases” or making “all glasses chip and ring” (Adams). The poem’s romantic tone comes from him complimenting her on her best qualities. However, in “Living in Sin” Rich develops a cold, dull, and dark tone through words such as “writhe,” “relentless,” “grime,” and “coldly” as well as the unappealing depiction of her lover and the studio she lives in. The contrast between the relationships portrayed by the poems is also clear. For example, “Love Poem” ends with the narrator accepting her clumsiness and claiming that without her, his life would be meaningless (Adams). But in “Living in Sin,” the poem ends with the woman waking up in the morning only to dread the oncoming day (Robinson).

The forms of love shown in “Living in Sin” and “Love Poem” demonstrate that love can either be strong or weak in a relationship. In “Living in Sin” Rich uses the contrast at the beginning of the poem and other sections to convey a troubled relationship that a girl feels trapped in. In “Love Poem” Nims takes a light-hearted and loving approach to convey a relationship that is full of love, and the message of loving someone despite his or

her flaws. By juxtaposing these two poems, the reader can receive an understanding of the way that love exists in different forms.

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Two Giants, Hemingway vs. Faulkner: A Style Guide

The writing styles of Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner are such apparent opposites that they have been staked in the ground of literary criticism as figuratively as the north and south poles. Each author has been identified beyond even their personal identities, given the constructed critical literary terms “Hemingwayesque” and “Faulknerian.” The two writing giants were known to openly criticize one another in their time, with Faulkner publicly declaring Hemingway as an artistic “coward” and the latter scorning the work of his antithetical counterpart (Bolton 52). The pair are long-standing favorites of literary critics to contrast, and at greater inspection to compare. This paper explores syntax, diction, and narration in Hemingway’s “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” and Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily.” The two authors’ radically different approaches of phrasing clauses through punctuation, Germanic versus Latin descriptions, and the use of point-of-view are examined.

The case is evident, and a clear paradigm of the authors’ individual hypotactic and paratactic approaches, from the outset of both stories. In “A Rose for Emily,” Faulkner opens with a single-sentence paragraph describing the event of Ms. Emily’s funeral:

When Ms. Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old manservant—a combined gardener and cook—had seen in at least ten years. (Faulkner 33)

In this one sentence, with Faulkner’s heavy usage of commas, a colon, and the dash, it is easy to see his hypotactic style in conjoining more than several asides and a focused intent to describe and expand the moment into emotions and events, providing history and backdrop, told from a first-person “our” determiner. Jumping to Hemingway’s “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place,” the opening narration from the third-person “he” finds the narrating character late into the night at a café. Revealing no more than the location, its surroundings, and the present characters—this introductory paragraph makes an overt contrast to Faulkner:

It was late and everyone had left the café except an old

man who sat in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light. In the day time the street was dusty, but at night dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference. The two waiters inside the café knew that the old man was a little drunk, and while he was a good client they knew that if he became too drunk he would leave without paying, so they kept watch on him. (Hemingway 143)

There is not a word here about anything except the occasion at present. Though Hemingway also extends sentences beyond one thought, they are joined by the uncomplicated coordinating conjunctions “and,” “but,” “so,” and a rare “because.” From here most of Hemingway’s story is told (unlike Faulkner’s) through the dialogue of his interacting characters:

“Last week he tried to commit suicide,” one waiter said.

“Why?”

“He was in despair.”

“What about?”

“Nothing.”

“How do you know it was nothing?”

“He has plenty of money.” (Hemingway 143)

It is here that Hemingway’s parataxis becomes outstandingly clear with its brevity, and in the following narration: “A girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shown on the brass number on his collar. The girl wore no head covering and hurried beside him” (Hemingway 143). In his prose Hemingway’s “iceberg” analogy to writing surfaces:

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.

From these brief examples, differences in diction between the two writers also begin to become obvious. Throughout Hemingway’s story, he almost never strays from using Germanic language such as “plenty” and “nothing.” Although he often rewrote a manuscript several times, his straightforward word choices are quite intentional (Fleming 91). Faulkner, on the other hand, is well-known for his multitudinous use of Latinate

adjectives. A fine example from “A Rose for Emily” is in the description of Emily’s position in her town after her fiancé Homer Barron’s disappearance, “Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse” (Faulkner 39). Instead of choosing the sole best adjective, Faulkner makes no hesitation in choosing the five in this example, two of which contain the same root as “perversion” (Bolton 55).

Style is not only the art of sentence structure and diction; those same word choices lead to narration and further to point-of-view. These stories are told with differing narrative voices, Faulkner’s in the first-person and with a collective point-of-view, using “our” and “we,” and Hemingway’s in the third-person with the pronoun “he”—or even more lending to his paratactic style, no pronoun at all, maintaining the point-of-view of a single character.

Although both stories have contrasting modes, they both employ a similar literary device in their endings, switching thought presentation from character to narrator and back. Faulkner’s exchange from the collective to the pronoun “they” has led to much academic study and added to the density of this famous mystery. In Hemingway’s final narrative passage there is an interchange, and a move away from the single-character narrator alternating with dialogue, to a free indirect mode of thought that switches from the waiter’s thoughts to himself, to a second-person rarely used “you” and back again to the original narrative character, who now shares his own internal monologue, philosophizing on the pointless “nada” of living.

The names of these two writers supersede the synthetic achievement of their works. They were perhaps pitted against each other by the literary forces critiquing them for their own purposes, baiting each one’s ego, or perhaps it was the men’s own unassisted desire to be crowned “writer of a generation.” When works like these are the resulting accomplishments, it becomes easy to see that the world needs both poles, north and south, to achieve balance, or spin away interminably into—nada.

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