The Writing Center Review

Selected Writings by Students of Kent State University Stark Campus

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# Table of Contents

**Preface**

Yvonne Williamson  
"Conflicting Views of Self-Representation Among African-Americans During the Harlem Renaissance"  
For ENG 33011: African-American Literature, Dr. Brenda Smith

Rena Brook  
"Book Review: Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto"  
For HIST 11051: History of Civilization II, Dr. Thomas Sosnowski

Evelyn Williams  
"Women with Disabilities: Addressing the Barriers to Adequate Sexual Health on a Global Level"  
For PSYC 41990: Writing in Psychology, Dr. Julie Cremeans-Smith

Stephanie Gallagher  
"Issues Concerning Black Vernacular English"  
For ENG 31001: Fundamentals of English Grammar, Dr. Keith Lloyd

Shelly Stephanoff  
"A Tragic Example"  
For ENG 39096: Baseball in Literature and History, Dr. Rob Sturr and Dr. Leslie Heaphy

Caitlin Jones  
"The Wonders of Rock Salt"  
For GEOL 11040: Earth Dynamics, Dr. Carrie Schweitzer

Aaron Hubbard  
"Perception and the Body: A Feminist Critique of Jonathan Swift’s ‘The Lady’s Dressing Room’"  
For ENG 34003: British Literature 1660-1800, Dr. Mary Rooks

Jill Wingard  
"Patronized?"  
For ENG 33011: African-American Literature, Dr. Brenda Smith
Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

~Zora Neale Hurston

When we enter the University setting at Kent State Stark, we find ourselves deluged with writing assignments — everything from pondering the nature of existence to preparing a speech outline. Through such assignments, we are able to discover what we believe. Writing forces us to enter into a dialogue—a conversation—with the academic world. At its best, writing empowers us to express opinions, impressions, and interpretations; it allows us to become active learners, rather than just passive receivers of information.

The staff of The Writing Center extends our congratulations to all of the student writers whose work is included in this year’s issue. Our appreciation also goes out to all of the talented writers who are not recognized in this issue, as length restraints prevented us from publishing all of the excellent material we received. We wish all writers continued success and sincerely hope that writing will continue to help us all discover what we believe.

Talent is born of encouragement and support. While the writers whose work makes up this journal are talented, a word of thanks must go out to the professors who offer daily encouragement and support, not only to these writers, but to each of us. In addition, we would also like to thank all the faculty members who have supported The Writing Center Review by encouraging their students to participate. Without them, we would be looking at a collection of blank pages.

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We applaud the efforts of all Kent State University Stark students and congratulate those whose work is present here.

We hope you enjoy!

The Writing Center Review Staff
Conflicting Views of Self-Representation Among African-Americans During the Harlem Renaissance

So 'tain't no use in me telling you somethin' unless Ah give you de understandin' to go 'long wid it.

~Zora Neale Hurston,
Their Eyes Were Watching God

Two major movements were running simultaneously during the period of the Harlem Renaissance. The black bourgeoisie writers, such as W.E.B. DuBois and Alain Locke, were at odds with the Bohemians, writers like Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman, and Langston Hughes. The bourgeoisie, or the Middle Class, felt that all African American writing should be propaganda focused solely on the positive aspect of Negro life in order to elevate the status of the population in the eyes of the country. Writers like DuBois and Locke believed that all art should be a protest, a fight for social and political equality for the African American population. Arnold Rampersad, in his article “The Book That Launched the Harlem Renaissance,” speaking of Locke’s The New Negro, points out that “[u]nifying these men and women was their growing sense of certainty that black America was on the verge of something like a second Emancipation—this time not by government mandate but by the will and accomplishments of the people, especially the artists and intellectuals” (89). Thus, Locke and other like minded people held that the African American population had continued to be in a kind of ‘slavery’ up until around 1915; a slavery from which their protest literature was now going to free them, so long as the writings of the time upheld the position and sustained only the best aspects of Negro life. Hurston and others contended that the art and literature of the time should portray every aspect of Negro life in order to represent the population in a more honest light, thereby illustrating a sense of pride in the culture and that there is no shame in being human, no matter what the color of one’s skin may be. This is a reminder to all people that there is no one “perfect race” but every man, woman, and child has their own set of demons to fight and their own angels sitting on their shoulders. No person or group is exempt from the darker side of life.

Interestingly, among the editorials found in the March 1925 issue of the Survey Graphic Harlem Number, which Locke himself designed and edited, the second paragraph states, in regards to Harlem itself, that “[o]ne of its best informed leaders remarks that the Negro in Harlem is like the poor relation who inherits a limousine: he can ill afford to keep it going... the mere pressure to win and hold shelter imposes a tax on the wage-earner that leaves little margin for self-improvement and less for cooperative social activity” (Editorials). The admission here that not all of the population has the privilege of living within the sphere of middle class seems to contradict the whole concept of what the bourgeoisie was attempting to articulate to the world. This is where Hurston and some of her contemporaries step in with the notion that it is essential to the rising feeling of racial pride to honestly portray the life of all Negroes and not just the small group of people who enjoy the luxuries of the Middle Class lifestyle. In her essay, “How It Feels To Be Colored Me,” Zora Neale Hurston states quite frankly, “I am the granddaughter of slaves...it fails to register depression with me” (1031). The Harlem Renaissance was a time when the African American people as a whole were beginning to define themselves outside of the bonds of slavery. This is not to say that they were attempting to sweep the past under the rug, however,
some merely preferred to look at the present and prepare for the future. A number of Hurston’s contemporaries, such as Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman, also held similar beliefs, as is evident in their writings. In his novel, *Infants of the Spring*, Wallace Thurman offers up an exposé of the inner workings of the major players of the Harlem Renaissance. He takes a no holds barred approach to his truth-telling regarding his contemporaries and the notion of the movement itself. In chapter XXI of his novel, he provides his readers with a parody of the inner workings of a Harlem Salon in which he portrays many of the personalities of his contemporaries, albeit with fictitious names, but whose character traits are easily enough pinned to specific artists of the time. One example of this is his portrayal of the character that he calls Sweetie Mae Carr. Sweetie Mae is intended to be a representation of Zora Neale Hurston, which is evident in Thurman’s description of his ‘fictional’ character:

Sweetie Mae was a short story writer, more noted for her rabid wit and personal effervescence than for any actual literary work. She was a great favorite among those whites who went in for Negro prodigies. Mainly because she lived up to their conception of what a typical Negro should be. It seldom occurred to any of her patrons that she did this with tongue in cheek (1272).

Hurston was known for her outgoing personality and sense of self that was very energetic and uncompromising. Thurman also gives a description of Langston Hughes in the guise of his character Tony Crews. When speaking of the two volumes of work that Crews had already published at the time of the salon, Thurman’s character Raymond explains “[b]oth had been excessively praised by whites and universally damned by Negroes. Considering the nature of his work this was to be expected” (1273). Hughes was another writer of the period who felt unashamed of the many facets of the African American population and was unafraid to delve into even the darkest aspects of life in Harlem. For his open and unassuming representation of the ‘real life’ of the Negro artists in the Harlem Renaissance, the members of the community who desired to only show the ‘lighter’ side of life recriminated against Thurman.

As with Thurman, Langston Hughes is also not hindered in his writing by the cult of expectations produced by the Negro Middle Class and Hughes pulls off the remarkable accomplishment of accepting and acknowledging the history of slavery while, at the same time, refusing to allow that same history to hold him back from expressing himself, and the culture that surrounds him. He expresses his remembrance of slavery in one of his earlier poems, “American Heartbreak:”

I am the American heartbreak—
Rock on which Freedom
Stumps its toe—
The great mistake
That Jamestown
Made long ago (9).

With these six short lines Hughes sums up the feelings shared by a number of African Americans alive during that time. The understanding that the very existence of slavery is the “heartbreak” that America trips over when its citizens cry “Freedom” is what many of the protest writers during the Harlem Renaissance wished for the people of the country to possess. Thus, when this poem was first released to the public it met with acclaim from both the white and black communities. And yet, he evokes Jamestown where slavery first began in 1619 when a Dutch slave trader brought a cargo of Africans and traded them to the townspeople in exchange for food (Slavery). These first African slaves, however, were not originally looked upon with the same eyes that the United States used in the years immediately preceding President Lincoln’s “Emancipation Proclamation.” When the Dutch sailor traded his cargo of flesh in order to fill his own belly, those people who came out of his hold were looked upon more as indentured servants than as slaves. An indentured servant is one who must only work for another until a debt has been repaid, after which time the servant is given back his or her freedom. An indentured servant is one who must only work for another until a debt has been repaid, after which time the servant is given back his or her freedom. Thus, the fact that Hughes refers to this arrangement that took place in Jamestown as “[t]he great mistake... [m]ade long ago” (my italics) leaves the reader with the feeling that the narrator of this particular poem is of the mindset that slavery was something that happened in the past and it was a lapse in judgment, a gravely serious lapse, but mistakes are things that have the potential for forgiveness. This notion of forgiving “those who have sinned against us,” a common tenant of the
Christian ‘Our Father’ prayer, is not one that all of the members of the Harlem Renaissance freely embraced.

Langston Hughes gives a more overt condemnation of those who belong to the Black Middle Class and who only wish for the Negro art and literature to spotlight the positive aspects of Harlem life. In his pair of poems “Low to High” and “High to Low,” the narrators are each presumably members of the lower class and of the black bourgeoisie, respectively. Each one is commenting on the gripes of the other. The member of the black masses who voices his opinion in the poem “Low to High” questions:

How can you forget me?
But you do!
You said you was gonna take me
Up with you—
Now you’ve got your Cadillac,
you done forgot that you are black.
How can you forget me
When I’m you? (Ins. 1-8, 249).

In response, the elite or “high” end voice smacks openly of the bourgeoisie beliefs:

God knows
We have had our troubles, too—
One trouble is you:
you talk too loud,
cuss too loud,
look too black,
don’t get anywhere,
and sometimes it seems
you don’t even care.
The way you send your kids to school
stockings down,
(not Ethical Culture)
the way you shout out loud in church,
(not St. Phillips)
and the way you lounge on doorsteps
just as if you were down South,
(not at 409)
the way you clown—
the way, in other words,
you let me down—
me, trying to uphold the race
and you—

well, you can see,
we have our problems,
too, with you. (250-251).

There is so much packed into these two short poems that an entire thesis could be spent explicating it, so, for the purposes of this essay it will be sufficient to address the fact that Hughes is, not very discreetly, admonishing those of the higher classes for so inhumanely dismissing those members of the black masses; a group of people who also deserve to have their hardships and honors spoken of with truth and feeling.

One of the most well known authors from the Harlem Renaissance who also gives voice to the black masses is Zora Neale Hurston. In the article “The Queen of the Harlem Renaissance: Her Works Were Lost, but Not Forever” briefly discusses the contentions toward her work that ran rampant throughout her lifetime. It states, “black intellectuals ... declared that she was furthering the stereotypical notions held by whites that blacks were simple-minded, comical, and superstitious” though “her main focus in compiling black folk-lore was to document and preserve for history a culture that she believed was quickly becoming a thing of the past” (53). Hurston was not a member of the school of thought that chose to dictate to its artists who shall create what and on whose terms. She believed that the African American people should possess a sense of pride in themselves, their histories, and their cultures. Therefore, she could not sit back and write impressionistic literature that would lead all of the members of the black masses to believe that because they did not fit into the interracially defined Middle Class stereotype they were, therefore, unacceptable as people. This would have had the potential to create feelings of inhumaneness more severe than slavery itself had done, due to the fact that it would be trickling down from the upper echelons of their own racial community and not being forced upon them by an outside “other.”

“John Redding Goes to Sea” is a story that can be found in the book Zora Neale Hurston: The Complete Stories. The story opens with a couple arguing over whether or not their son has “got a spell on ‘im.” John Redding’s mother believes that her son has had some sort of spell cast over him because he does not behave in ways that herself or the people of the village think to be ‘normal,’ while John’s father dismisses her accusations...
as complete and utter nonsense. “Ah keep on telling yuh, woman, tain’s so. Believe it all you wants tuh, but dontcha tell mah son none of it” (1). Hurston’s use of dialect and her character’s belief in the supernatural as an explanation for behavior are prime examples of why the members of the Black Middle Class argued against her fiction for “furthering the stereotypical notions of whites” (Queen 53). What they fail to notice is the glaring fact that there is more to Hurston’s fiction than what can be skimmed from the surface. If a reader were to quickly read through stories such as “John Redding Goes to Sea,” he/she may overlook the complex beauty that Zora Neale Hurston so eloquently weaves throughout her fiction. While her opposition may focus merely on the unacceptable nature of dialect in the world of intelligent and successful people, they neglect to see both the need for the acceptance of all people, and not just those who fit into neat little population packages, and Hurston’s critiques buried within her seemingly simple words. For example, after the narrator tells us of the discussion between John’s mother and father, the reader is given a description of John’s personality and an explanation of why he was thought to be such an odd boy.

Perhaps ten-year-old John was puzzling to the simple folk there in the Florida woods for he was an imaginative child and fond of day-dreams. The St. John River flowed a scarce three hundred feet from his back door...On the bosom of the stream float millions of delicately colored hyacinths. The little brown boy loved to wander down to the water’s edge, and, casting in dry twigs, watch them sail away down stream to Jacksonville, the sea, the wide world and John Redding wanted to follow them (1).

Hurston juxtaposes the adult explanation of conjuration with the child idea of freedom. To the adults, he was a “queer” child because he sat all day by the side of a stream “day-dreaming.” One point to make is that this image of the child dreaming of floating off into worlds that he has never seen comes alongside Wallace Thurman’s equating of the artists of the Harlem Renaissance with the “Infants of the Spring.” It is possible to see the parental figures in this story as the first generation of African American writers who held fast to the notion of all art as propaganda and the only way to portray the ‘New Negro’ is through his achievements and never through his failures. While, the child, John, can be viewed as this second generation of artists who are looking down the stream of a culture’s creativity and wanting to hitch a ride on the first boat that comes through.

The Harlem Renaissance was a tidal wave of contradictory tenets that jumped from one end of the spectrum to the other. One group of people, which mainly consisted of the black bourgeoisie such as W.E.B. DuBois and Alain Locke took to the belief that art should never exist just for art’s sake. To these people, art was a means to an end; it was a propaganda tool used for the representation of the African American culture in a constant and unrealistically positive light. Whereas, the group referred to as the Bohemians, with followers like Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Wallace Thurman, believed that art could exist simply for the sake of art; it was a vehicle through which a pride of race as well as a pride of self could be fostered.
Works Cited


Book Review: Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto

The journals of Emmanuel Ringelblum chronicled three years of Polish Jewry’s persecution by the Nazi occupying forces in Poland. *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* relates, in human terms, the systematic demoralization and destruction of the Jewish population in Warsaw. Many of Ringelblum’s journal entries related atrocities committed throughout Poland, Russia and Europe. Ringelblum compiled three years of heart wrenching accounts of brutality, humiliation, murder, torture and betrayal. The Jewry of Warsaw was treated worse than animals by the Germans, and by members of the Jewish community, as well. The Nazis invaded and subsequently occupied Poland in 1939. The journal entries compiled by Emmanuel Ringelblum relate consistent themes of corruption, humiliation, inhuman conditions and cruelty.

The Nazi’s inhumane treatment of the Warsaw Jews was a calculated process. The Germans began the occupation of Warsaw by exerting total control over the entire population. They instilled fear and dread on Christian Poles as well as Jewish Poles. The Christian Poles were “seized, at home, in the street, in café’s” (26). They would wear Jewish armbands to avoid being sent out of Poland. They thought the Jewish people were treated better in work camps inside Poland (25).

The overwhelming barbaric treatment was centered on the Jewish population. The cruelty and demoralization started with decrees to deprive the Jewish people of possessions, homes, money, food, dignity, and ultimately, the hope of survival. Decrees were enacted to force the Jews to register all their possessions, furniture was confiscated and homes were requisitioned (11, 15, 18). The Jewish population was not permitted to use public libraries or travel by train (16, 17). The Germans were progressing toward herding the Jewish population into a Ghetto for total control to facilitate the destruction of the entire population of Warsaw Jews.

The Ghetto was closed after the 25th of November 1940. Jewish people who made their living outside the Ghetto boundaries were left without a source of income (88). The Jewish people were forced to give up their homes as a means of survival and access to markets. They were expected to pay for food supplied by the Germans with gold and foreign currency (90). The food rations the Jewish people were permitted inside the Ghetto were so meager they could not survive. According to the editorial comments of Jacob Sloan, “The average food ration contained some 800 calories. It consisted of bread, potatoes, and ersatz fat only” (97). Ringelblum states that people were falling dead in the streets (143).

Emmanuel Ringelblum went on to show great despair about the beggars, especially the children. Many of the journal passages told of the doom of these poor souls. One passage states, “children as emaciated as skeletons, barefoot and naked, who put out frozen-blue hands for alms – in vain” (225). One hundred and fifty people were starving to death daily by the middle of May 1941, and the rate kept increasing (181). The people starving in the streets would beg for a while, realize they were doomed and silently wait to die (207). The aid that was provided by the House Committees would never have been enough. Whole neighborhoods and entire families were dying from hunger (138, 205, 207). Ringelblum relates, in January of 1942, men women and children lay on the ground begging near every house (249). The German’s process of eliminating the Jewish population by starvation was cruel, inhuman and, unfortunately, effective.
The Jews of Warsaw were forced to live under deplorable physical and mental conditions. They had to live with the constant threat of death or injury. Ringelblum writes of many occasions where innocent people were beaten or killed for simply being Jewish. Germans would see Jewish people in the area and beat them. It did not matter if they were men, women or children (88, 115). There are entries of acts against Jewish men and women purely to cause degradation. A woman was forced to wash the pavement with her panties and a man was told to kneel on the ground and be urinated on (17, 91). There was a constant shortage of coal for heat and electricity (235). The crowded living conditions in the Ghetto made the rampant spread of disease impossible to control (219). People were seized on the streets and forced to go to work camps. Many times passes to be exempt were ignored (161, 167). Living in the Ghetto was a continual mental and physical battle for survival. Most would lose the battle. Ringelblum concedes in June of 1942 "only a miracle can save us: the sudden end of the war" (291).

The extensive smuggling of food into the Ghetto provided a major source of survival for many inhabitants. Smuggling was a lucrative, albeit perilous, occupation. The smugglers may have profited, but without their operations, the Jewish population would have starved to death much sooner (111, 216). Ringelblum notes in a journal entry in June of 1942, putting an end to the smuggling operations the "general plan to exterminate the Jews...through a policy of systematic starvation" (293). On June 10, 1942, the smugglers were slaughtered, forcing the population to exist on 7.5 dekos of bread a day (292-293). The Germans were bringing to fruition their calculated plan to exterminate the Jewish population (291).

The journal entries documenting the corruption and brutality of the Jewish police and the Jewish Council are many. The zeal with which the Jewish police carried out the demands of the Nazis is horrific. The Jewish Council betrayed the members of their own community they were supposed to represent. The Nazi's plan included this demoralization. The Jewish people had to fear the Germans and the Poles, but also members of their own community. The Jewish Council consisted of unsavory men responsible for meeting quotas for the work camps (107, 154). The rich could buy passes from the Jewish Council to avoid the work camps. The poor were sent to the work camps because they could not afford to pay for the passes. The people were left to starve to death because they could not pay for ration cards (41, 49). The Jewish Council favored the rich and let the poor carry the burden of taxes while the rich paid no taxes at all (235, 246). Ringelblum writes, "The entire work of the Jewish Council is an evil perpetrated against the poor that cries to the very heaven" (235).

The Jewish community despised the Jewish police. They formed "press gangs" to meet the work camp quotas. They would seize anyone off the street and demand a bribe to be released. Those who could not pay were sent to the work camps. Ringelblum stated, "Generically speaking, the Jewish police are fearfully corrupt" (154-155). The Jewish police showed no mercy during the resettlement. They even seemed to enjoy sending the members of their own community to their deaths (330). The Jewish police made a profit from the smuggling operations until the smugglers were stopped. The Jewish police were put in charge of halting all smuggling over the Ghetto wall in June of 1942. The smuggling was the source of food in the Ghetto and the Jews were made to starve themselves (302). According to the editorial comment, the brutality and service of the Jewish police did not save them from deportation. Two thousand Jewish police and their families were deported on September 26, 1942 (307).

Emmanuel Ringelblum was mortified with the little resistance the Jews of Warsaw exerted while being "led like sheep to the slaughter" (310). There were no German forces casualties during the relocation (310). The people even showed little aggression toward the Jewish police as they were herded to the "Unschlagplatz" where they would be sent to their deaths (311, 333). The population’s psychological state was completely controlled by the Germans. They were so conditioned to fear the German forces that the people left after the resettlement blamed the Jewish police for the slaughter. This was of course true, but the overall blame was the Nazi’s. The Jews could not kill Germans, so they exacted a small measure of revenge on members of the Jewish police force (206, 333). The police chief, Lejkin, was killed, and the remaining Jewish policemen were hated and remonstrated by Jews, Poles and Ger-
They betrayed their own people to save their own lives and were despised by everyone (330).

*Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* chronicled the mass murder of over 300,000 Jewish people (337). The three years leading up to the final extermination were a fight for survival with the outcome already determined by the despicable Nazi regime (291). The Jewish people of Warsaw existed the best they could under inhuman conditions. The resettlement process from June to September 1942 was carried out with indiscriminate callousness. The rich, the poor, the intellectuals and those who served the Nazis were chosen at will to die in extermination camps. Some who could still afford the bribes may have survived, but most did not survive (314, 335). Ringelblum and his family were executed on March 7, 1944 (347).

Reading *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* was an illuminating experience. Emmanuel Ringelblum and the other contributors of the journals were brave and honorable people. Their tenacity and dedication under such horrible circumstances has left for readers passages filled with misery, cruelty, despair, and a truthful depiction of the horrifying plight of the Jews in Warsaw and all of occupied Europe. My perspective of the extermination of Jews during World War II is now more realistic. Often, I learn about historical events with emotional detachment. The mental pictures created by the journal passages elicited an emotional response for me as a reader. The dreadful experiences the Jewish people were subjected to cannot be read without sadness and regret. The human factors of these accounts of cruelty, degradation, murder and destruction have changed my emotional detachment. This is a book all students should find a worthwhile and educating read. *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* provides more than mere words. These horrible things happened to real people and are not just facts and figures in history books.
Women face a multitude of barriers to sexual health: including their gender, cultural norms, socioeconomic level, and any physical or mental disability that may exist. In many developed countries, these barriers have been addressed; however, in many developing countries they continue to be a hindrance to receiving adequate sexual healthcare (Burn, 2005; Smith, Murray, Yousafzai, and Kasonka, 2004; Yoshida, Li, and Odette, 1999). In some cultures, women are placed at a low-level in their social hierarchy, limiting their ability to access education and services related to their sexual health. Oftentimes, it is the male partner who makes the decisions regarding sexual health, including the use of condoms to prevent sexually transmitted disease. In some cultures, it is the norm to have multiple sex partners or coerced and unprotected sex (Burn, 2005; Fox et al., 2007; Smith, 2007). The latter happens frequently among the disabled female population, primarily because of the inequalities that exist within this subgroup of many cultures, namely in developing countries (Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999).

The United Nations and other governmental agencies have implemented policies in many developing countries, giving women with disabilities the same human rights protection as any other person. Unfortunately, these women are often unaware and unable to exercise these rights in practical ways (Burn, 2005; Glasier, Gulmezoglu, Schmid, Moreno, and Van Look, 2006). For example, women, particularly those with disabilities, are not given the same educational opportunities as those without a disability. These women may encounter such issues as pregnancy and childbirth, sexually transmitted disease (including HIV/AIDS), and menopause with little or no education about how to cope with them (Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999). The literature addressing sexual health issues is readily available regarding women in general; however, it is more limited when it comes to women with disabilities. These women do exist; both in developed and developing countries and they have many sexual healthcare needs that warrant further investigation. These needs include education and access to services, assessment of behavioral patterns, and development of innovative ways to address their sexual health concerns (Doyal and Anderson, 2004; Glover-Graf and Reed, 2006; Kvam and Braathen, 2008; Milberger, 2002). The purpose of this paper is to review the literature and investigate the barriers that hinder the sexual health and well-being of women, while also looking at the common thread of violence that appears to be elevated among women with disabilities (Kvam et al., 2008; Milberger, 2002; Smith, 2007).

Inequalities and Violence

Understanding the inequalities that exist for women worldwide, including those of gender, cultural norms, socioeconomic levels, and disabilities is crucial in helping address the barriers that exist in accessing sexual healthcare services (Burn, 2005; Glasier et al., 2006). Many women experience not just one of these inequalities but multiple issues of inequality. In addition, there is a common thread of violence that occurs for many women throughout the world, particularly for women with disabilities (Glover-Graf et al., 2006;
Kvam et al., 2008; Milberger, 2002; Smith, 2007). This violence includes acts of sexual abuse, rape, and emotional abuse; all of these acts of violence play a role in the sexual health and mental well-being of all women, particularly those with a disability (Burn, 2005; Doyal et al., 2005; Fox et al., 2007; Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Milberger, 2002; Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999). Regardless of their age, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation, women with disabilities are twice as likely to be victimized as a woman without a disability (Kvam et al., 2008; Milberger, 2002). One study of 7,027 Canadian women shows that women with disabilities have a 40% greater risk of encountering violence, particularly that of a severe nature (Smith, 2007). Despite greater occurrences and increased severity of abuse among those who are disabled, it is quite common for the abuse to go unreported due to fear of retaliation from their abuser (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008). For women with and without disabilities, the issue of violence continues to negatively impact their sexual health and general well-being (Glasier et al., 2006).

Gender Inequalities

According to the literature, women across many cultures are subject to male dominance in decision making (Burns, 2005; Doyal et al., 2004; Fox et al., 2007; Glasier et al., 2006). This is especially true regarding such issues as birth control, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted disease, and other issues which affect a woman's sexual health. In such countries as Ethiopia, Nigeria, and India, a woman's body is considered to be the property of her husband (Burns, 2005). Men with such a mindset often think that if their wife is on birth control, either she is currently unfaithful or she will become unfaithful in the future (Burn, 2005; Fox et al., 2007). Yet these men oftentimes practice multiple partner sex, either through multiple marriage partners or extramarital relationships. All of the women these men are sexually active with are at a higher risk for various sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS (Burn, 2005; Fox et al., 2007; Glasier et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004). In Sub-Saharan Africa, young girls are five times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS because older men, infected with the disease, are taking younger girls as their wives and mistresses. Yet in this region, over half of these young girls could not name one method for preventing HIV (Burn, 2005). This clearly indicates that women are at a disadvantage when it comes to their sexual health decisions and because disabled women are placed at a lower position in the social hierarchy, they have even less control over such decisions (Burn, 2005; Glasier et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004). Women who have a subordinate status in their social position are at a disadvantage because it is more difficult or even impossible for them to negotiate safer sex practices with their male partners (Burn, 2005; Dannerbeck and Muriuki, 2007; Glasier et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004; Fox et al., 2007). This creates a barrier, making it more difficult for women to access sexual healthcare and implement healthy sexual behaviors. This is evidenced by increasing rates of HIV among women in countries that place women at a lower stratum of their social hierarchy (Fox et al., 2007).

Economic Dependence

Economic dependency on men also makes it easier for women to fall into the trap of exchanging sex for money or other basic needs, such as housing or food (Burn, 2005; Smith et al., 2004). It is also common for women with disabilities to remain in an abusive relationship because they depend on the abuser for support (Fox et al., 2007; Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Milberger, 2002; Smith, 2007). African women reported that economic and financial abuse and neglect have made a negative impact on their lives, including their health outcomes (Burn, 2005; Fox et al., 2007). For example, one woman reported that her partner communicated, “if you have sex with me, I will buy you whatever you want” (Fox et al., 2007, p. 589), tying financial support to sexual favors (a form of abuse), so even if a woman knows her partner is abusive or has a sexually transmitted disease she will oftentimes feel forced to comply to sexual behaviors that risk her health (Fox et al., 2007). Even in such developed countries as the United States and Canada, disabled women are oftentimes economically disadvantaged and their partner uses this to control care-giving. Glover-Graf and colleagues (2006) report that neglect is “the failure of a caretaker to provide necessary goods, services, or emotional care,” and these forms of neglect “can include intentional or unintentional acts of abandonment,
isolation, denial of food, health services, or attention” (Glover-Graf et al., 2006, p. 44). These types of conditions will, in turn, impact the ability of women to make decisions regarding issues of sexual health (Fox et al., 2007; Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Milberger, 2002; Yoshida et al., 1999). Research indicates that many women with disabilities find it very difficult to leave their present situations, even if abuse or violence is part of the relationship, because they lack the resources and social supports that women without disabilities have available to them (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Smith, 2007).

Education and Employment

Women with disabilities are more likely to be under educated and unemployed (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008; Smith, 2007). This gap in education and employment for women with disabilities appears to be worldwide; however, until recently there has been little research on how these gaps affect these women and their living conditions (Glover-Graf et al., 2006). The limited research that is available indicates that because these women are often times dependent on someone else to take care of their daily needs, they are less likely to report the incidence of violence that can compromise their sexual health and well-being (Fox et al., 2007; Milberger, 2002). One Zambian woman disabled by HIV/AIDS says, “I don’t want to just sit there and be on benefits, I want to be useful,” indicating that while many women feel dependent on others, they would prefer to be self-sufficient (Doyal et al., 2005, p. 1733). Despite their willingness to work and be self-sufficient, employment opportunities are lacking for disabled women, yet these women continue to see education and employment as tools for their own empowerment (Kvam et al., 2008; Milberger, 2002; Smith, 2007). With over 60 million disabled people in Africa, the effect of disability on individuals is becoming an area of further research. Generally, their living conditions are poorer, with very little opportunity for women with disabilities to further their education or become employed (Kvam et al., 2008), giving them a sense of hopelessness and decreased self-efficacy.

Stereotypes of Disabilities

Women with disabilities not only experience economic and physical barriers to accessing healthcare, but they also experience “attitudinal barriers that go deeper than a lack of understanding of a disabled person’s sexuality or desire for motherhood” (Smith et al., 2004, p. 124). These attitudinal barriers contribute to a further decrease in their levels of self-esteem (Smith et al., 2004). Erroneous beliefs about the cause and transmission of disability perpetuate negative stereotypes, leading women to feel more insecure about their disability. For example, in “Abuse against Women with Disabilities” by Noreen M. Glover-Graf and Bruce J. Reed, women in general are less valued, shown by the inequality that exists in pay and status. However, women with disabilities are even further stigmatized as “dependent” and even “asexual” due to their disabilities (Glover-Graf et al., 2006, p. 43). While it is a common false assumption that disabled women are not sexually active, many are (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008; Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999). Therefore, they are also facing such issues as pregnancy, birth, and sexually transmitted disease. Failure to provide sexual health education and services for disabled women should be further investigated, as it is crucial for these women to have equal access. Previous research indicates that a lack of governmental involvement and biased attitudes of healthcare providers both play a role in insufficient access to sexual health education and services for women with disabilities (Burns, 2005; Glasier et al., 2006; Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Yoshida et al., 1999).

Governmental Policies

While the United Nations and other governmental agencies have instituted policies regarding the rights of both women in general and women with disabilities, these policies are rarely carried out in day-to-day living (Burn, 2005; Gill, Kirschner, Reis, 2004; Glasier et al., 2006). Oftentimes, a lack of education about their rights causes many women to continue to be treated unequally (Burn, 2005; Gill et al., 2004; Glasier et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008). While women with disabilities are identified as a group with needs for reproductive and sexual healthcare, these needs are oftentimes not met (Fox et al., 2007; Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999). Because of the barriers of gender inequality, cultural norms, poverty, and physical inaccessibil-
ity, these women continue to encounter difficulties acquiring the services they need (Burn, 2005; Smith et al., 2004). Women with disabilities have limited social supports (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2004) and they may be limited in their mobility due to a lack of assistive devices (wheelchairs, walkers, or canes) (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004). These women are oftentimes isolated due to an inability to drive or to afford transportation. It is also common for women with disabilities to have low self-esteem or self-concept which inhibits their socialization with others in their community (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999). These women are oftentimes afraid or just unable to defend or exercise their rights within the society. It is also common for the governmental entities who institute these protective policies to avoid enforcing them (Burn, 2005; Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004).

Healthcare Service

According to Yoshida and colleagues (1999), it is of utmost importance for young women with disabilities to have access to information about sex and sexuality. However, it is common for these women to be denied the opportunities to learn about sexuality and sexual healthcare issues (Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999). Oftentimes, women with disabilities enter pregnancy and childbirth with no education on the changes that will occur within their bodies. This is due to a general lack in the education for those with disabilities and inaccurate attitudes among health practitioners who provide their healthcare services (Yoshida et al., 1999). In “Barriers to Accessing Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Services: The Situation of Women with Disabilities in Lusaka, Zambia,” nurse midwives are hesitant to accompany the delivery of a pregnant woman with a disability. These midwives cite fear of complications that may or may not arise due to the patient’s disability as a reason for referring them to other services (Smith et al., 2004). This makes it difficult for the disabled pregnant women to access good prenatal care and a safe delivery, as it would be very difficult for her to access a hospital delivery (Smith et al., 2004). However, according to Smith and colleagues (2004), these women sometimes alienate themselves from services because they are fearful of the reactions they will run into. This fear is legitimatized as several women share their experiences of how they encounter surprise by others who are shocked “that someone like them can get pregnant” (Smith et al., 2004, pg. 124). Accessing sexual healthcare is further hindered by poverty, as women often cannot afford the ‘hidden costs’ of prenatal care and a safe childbirth delivery (Smith et al., 2004). Public health clinics are seen as one way to help meet the needs of women in regards to their sexual healthcare (Smith et al., 2004). However, these clinics are difficult to access if one has limited resources and social supports. Unfortunately, this is oftentimes the case, particularly regarding women with disabilities (Gill et al., 1994; Smith et al., 2004).

Sexual Health Concerns

Sexually transmitted infections are on the rise worldwide, and while the literature appears consistent on this fact, it does not adequately address the issue of prevention and treatment for those with disabilities (Dannerbeck et al., 2007; Doyal et al., 2004; Fox et al., 2007; Glasier et al., 2006). There are limited studies reporting women with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, but these do not always address the incidence of sexually transmitted disease in general (Kvam et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2004). Regarding women with disabilities, the literature also seems to lack information on the availability of education and services for such issues as menstruation, menopause, or ovarian cysts. Therefore, more research is needed to ensure that these issues of sexual health are being addressed in populations of disabled women. There also appears to be a lack of research on the prevalence of sexual abuse among young women with disabilities. According to Glover-Graf and colleagues (2006), one reason that the issue of sexual abuse may not be studied as often is that it is a sensitive issue and especially women and children are hesitant to disclose such abuse. If a woman is disabled, she may be less likely to report abuse as it is oftentimes committed by a caregiver or intimate partner (Glover-Graf et al., 2006). A more subtle form of sexual abuse occurs when a man tells a disabled woman he loves her and will marry her for sex, but then leaves once she becomes pregnant or after the man has had his sexual needs met (Kvam et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2004). However, these women oftentimes admit that they respond
to any affection because they do not think they are capable of gaining the affections of a respectable man (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2004). This is especially common in Africa (Kvam et al., 2008), although it also happens in such developed countries as the United States (Glover-Graf et al., 2006). Oftentimes, these women feel inferior and they perceive unhealthy sexual advances as expressions of love and acceptance (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2004). Also, some women with disabilities may have impaired judgment which leaves them more vulnerable to physical or sexual abuse (Glover-Graf et al., 2006). Because the research indicates consistently that women with disabilities are more likely to experience all forms of violence, including sexual violence, it appears increased screening and interventions are needed to help these women overcome the barriers presented by these volatile incidents (Fox et al., 2007; Glasier et al., 2006; Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Kvam et al., 2008; Milberger, 2002; Smith, 2007; Smith et al, 2004).

Models for Intervention

There are different models that can be used to examine the issues involving women with disabilities and their sexual health, and while Yoshida and colleagues (1999) distinguish the biomedical model of the disability as one which deals only with the physical impairment of the disability, they focus on the importance of the biopsychosocial model. This model looks at the well-being of the complete person: biological, psychological, and social. Using this model to replicate similar studies would help to identify ways to address the barriers, reduce inequalities, and enable both women with and without disabilities to access sexual healthcare, reduce violence, and improve their general well-being. One weakness of Yoshida and colleagues (1999) is its limited size; however, future replications could be useful in investigating the issues involved in the overall health and well-being of women with disabilities.

Conclusion

The literature (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Milberger, 2002; Smith et al., 2004 and Yoshida et al., 1999) draws attention to the importance of increasing intervention strategies including advocacy activities for women with disabilities. These activities should also include those helpful in deterring and preventing partner and caregiver violence (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Smith, 2007). There is also an indicated need for an increase in community awareness and dissemination activities to educate healthcare providers and the general public about the sexual health needs of women with disabilities (Glover-Graf et al., 2006; Yoshida et al., 1999). These recommendations are easier to implement in countries where gender and social hierarchy are not major hindrances. In countries where these hindrances occur, it is more difficult to overcome social and cultural norms in order to remove the barriers that exist for women with disabilities (Gill et al., 1994; Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 1999).

In the quest to find solutions that address the complex sexual health issues of women with disabilities, it should not be forgotten that these women are simply that, women. While ensuring that the services developed fit the unique needs of this group, their need to be identified and accepted as “normal” should also be considered (Gill et al., 1994; Smith et al., 2004). Further research will help in gaining a greater understanding of the perceived sexual health needs of women with disabilities. Most importantly, it will assist in the development of effective strategies that will provide adequate education and equal access to services for women with disabilities. This would include strategies to meet not only the physical or sexual health needs of women with disabilities, but their psychological and social needs as well. Addressing the psychological and social needs of women with disabilities will provide them with increased self-worth and social support, which will in turn assist them in making healthier decisions regarding their sexual health.
References


For centuries, the legitimacy of Black Vernacular English (BVE), or African American English (AAVE), has been contested widely among several publications, opinions, media outlets, scholars, average Joes, et cetera, because of its inadequacy to measure up to the highly anglicized Standard American English (SAE). What most people do not realize, or fail to notice, is that BVE is a credible dialect of the English language, just like the Bostonian dialect or Southern dialect. However, since BVE is more widely used than most of its other non-SAE dialectical counterparts, it almost becomes a threat to the typical manic grammarian. Several misconceptions are to be addressed throughout this writing, including a brief history on BVE, the use of linguistics as a form of racism, the fact that it is and can be used competently as a useful grammatical structure, and some controversy that has risen in modern times.

Like just about any other language or dialect, BVE has its roots within another language. While BVE is a dialect of SAE, meaning, it is more or less a sub-language of SAE, its roots are also comprised of African languages and dialects. When African slaves were brought to America, they obviously did not have the privilege of being able to speak their own language within their community as other immigrants did such as Germans, Italians, Asians, and so on. They were not afforded the luxury of building their own “Little Africa” or carving themselves a place in American history. It was built and carved for them. When African slaves became the property of someone else, namely, a slaveholder, he or she made the decisions of every aspect of the slaves’ lives for them, including the language that was to be spoken. Think about what it is like to learn another language. Given the circumstances, one would rely heavily upon native speakers to learn the language, pronunciations, and inflections in order to speak in a competent way. The slaveholders, recognizing this difficulty, spoke to their slaves in the least formal way, stripping phrases and sentences completely to their deep structures:

From this, we can gather that the slaves had no reinforcement or grading scale in which they could keep track of their progress in pursuing another language. While the issue is not whether or not they received a gold star along the way of acquiring a new language, obviously being taught in an inefficient way had detrimental effects in that it became yet another way for slave owners and whites in general to mark them. And so the language began to change. What was once a “pidgin,” a rough communication between two types of people that spoke two different languages, became what is called a “creole,” or a completely different dialect. Connie Eble describes this transformation in her widely publicized PBS article: “Africans...creat[ed]
a language for immediate and limited communication called a *pidgin*. When Africans forgot or were forbidden to use their African languages to communicate with one another, they developed their English pidgin into their native tongue. A language that develops from a pidgin into a native language is called a *creole* (Eble).

It is also important to note that while most white Americans have books with first accounts of their history, many pictures of their ancestors (perhaps sometimes butchered) records of them coming to Ellis Island, most blacks today do not have that same luxury. This is because their history, more or less, is an oral one that was passed down through the generations because for a long time, there were not many slaves that were given the opportunity to learn how to read and write. In John Baugh’s scholarly article titled “A Survey of Afro-American English,” he explains this concept in more depth:

Black Americans were the only group to migrate to the United States who were not allowed to preserve their native language through transitional bilingual communities. Unlike the European immigrants, who typically left countries with well-established written traditions, black slaves left a homeland where oral histories were more common.” (Baugh 345)

Surely, this had some implications on the way BVE is styled today. For example, there are tens, if not hundreds of thousands of books today that directly explain the proper and improper ways of using SAE. Not so much for BVE.

Unfortunately, those who use BVE are often socially marked. The case between BVE and SAE certainly is no different. Whites using “baby-talk” as a tool for talking down to their slaves is only one illustration of many types of hegemonic uses concerning grammar and rhetoric. In Geneva Smitherman’s book, *Talkin’ and Testifyin’*, she demonstrates such a notion: “The early grammarians who envisioned their task as one of ‘regularizing’ and ‘purifying’ common speech unwittingly became part of the grand design to perpetuate the centuries-old class system” (Smitherman 187). She also talks about the “national mania for correctness” (185), a phrase coined by linguist Donald Lloyd in the regard that it applies to major white elitism. The fact that there is even an issue concerning whether or not BVE should be accepted into our American institutions such as schools or the workforce is a chilling example in itself. Because of the way those who use BVE speak, they are almost automatically discounted by most of their white counterparts because for some reason, such a dialect is considered “ghetto” or “lazy speak.” Such a racist notion has leaked into just about every single American institution. We constantly hear about how we should all express ourselves and embrace our uniqueness. The part that is left off is that it is okay to be an individual, as long as you conform to the collective whole (collective whole being white upper-to-middle class America).

It is no secret, nor a surprise, that institutions often use racism, especially through language. In our schools, “traditional methodologies have failed primarily because they have been prescriptive and corrective, and have focused on language structure rather than on communicative competency” (Taylor 40). The idea of the nun with a ruler comes to mind, where a single utterance of “ain’t” could get someone in big trouble. Mr. Taylor goes on to say: “African American children are fully capable of acquiring competency in [SAE]. However, they must be taught to do so in an environment… that motivates them to master [SAE] and inspires in them the belief that they can do so” (Taylor 40). Sounds like common sense, right? That’s because it is.

The workforce is also a large hurdle with those that regularly speak BVE. [T]he social world ‘out there’ (presumably beyond the ghetto, where all blacks aspire to, right?) demands linguistic conformity of blacks. Thus black students will need to master “correct” White English speech in order to git ovuh in the white world, hence they must learn to be switch hitters, dropping their Africanized English speech for White English as social situations warrant it.” (Smitherman 207)

Taking the previous idea a step further, Gerard McClendon, author of the book *Ax or Ask? The African American Guide to Better English*, called for African Americans “to be able to code switch…moving in and out of a situation to basically protect [themselves]” (McClendon). His main argument is that while it is important to celebrate the language within BVE, it...
is also important to have SAE readily available when a situation arises that makes it necessary. He goes on to say: “The black community basically suffers from economic, employment, and educational exploitation because we do not have adequate facility with the language” (McClendon). Mr. McClendon’s gift is rare because he is sending a positive message to the young black community by example. Time and again, those who speak BVE are very negatively criticized for the way they speak by whites. That is why Mr. McClendon’s work is so important. Instead of sending a negative message, “You’ll never get a job or move up in society speaking like that,” Mr. McClendon empowers black youth to not only learn SAE, but to want to learn it so they have the same chances and opportunities as their peers. Just like speaking a different way in front of peers than in front of elders, Mr. McClendon encourages the black youth to do the same with the way they speak. The example he used was something to the effect of: “You wouldn’t wear pajamas to an interview… there’s a time and a place for that” (McClendon). Just like there is a time and place for BVE (at home), there is a time and place for SAE (social settings).

Mr. McClendon is also unsettled by the education black children are receiving in regards to learning SAE. The message he is sending is a clear one: something needs to be done immediately within schools so that children may learn to speak “proper” English. His work involves traveling to schools across the country in order to educate our youth who regularly speak BVE to also familiarize themselves with SAE so they may have better opportunities. It is tremendously important for African Americans to take his message for what it is worth, because he could be seen as a role model for those who instead idolize rappers and sports stars. His solution is that teachers need to handle the issue regarding SAE versus BVE more carefully and take a more proactive role in these kids’ education by correcting their BVE, should the occasion arise. Because many black children and families do not have the advantage of being the ones in power, (i.e., board members and administrators in school districts, politicians, lawmakers, etc.) they are a minority among those who are raised to speak “proper” English and those who have the power to govern the way the education system operates. It is a slippery slope from the minute black children begin kindergarten because, according to Mr. McClendon, teachers are not correcting children’s grammar.

So what is the solution? In a perfect world, we could all speak in our own way, with our own dialect, and not be discriminated against or judged by the way we speak. But, as we have seen throughout history, it is only the popular group (and by popular, I mean the one that holds most of the power) that has the ability to shape the standards of society, make the rules, establish norms, and institutionalize acceptable ways of thinking, speaking, walking, working, playing, socializing in just about every aspect of our lives. It has been said that those who learn best are those who take what they already know and apply it to what they are learning. In my opinion, it is the best way to address the education issues children face with learning SAE. Going back to the example of learning another language, it would be most beneficial for children who speak BVE regularly to learn how to “translate” it into SAE, just as one would learn how to say a phrase in Spanish. Some may find it bothersome and unnecessary to learn BVE in order to teach SAE, but I feel that true lovers of grammar, especially those wanting to teach it, should familiarize themselves with the basic structures to enable them to ‘interpret’ sentences and phrases to children that do not have an enriched background with SAE. Like any language or dialect, creole, pidgin, whatever you want to call it, BVE has a rich history, and there is a reason it carries on today. Although it may not carry a meaning to the larger population, it does not mean that it should be discounted or treated as less of a language.
Works Cited


Peter Schilling Jr.’s novel, *The End of Baseball*, imagines a scenario of the integration of African American ballplayers into the major leagues. The protagonist, Josh Gibson, is a player of great promise who wants people to remember his name as the best ballplayer there ever was. It is important to note that this paper examines the fictional character of Josh Gibson and is not indicative of the real person of Josh Gibson. The fictional Josh has proven himself in the Negro Leagues, but now he has to prove himself in the major leagues. If he had received his chance at major league baseball when he was younger, his name would not have been forgotten. However, Josh’s chance has come too late, for his body, a player’s main commodity, is showing its age and abuse from years of playing ball. Aside from his delayed chance and deteriorating body, Josh faces other outside forces, such as the enormity of integration and unforgiving crowds and reporters. These forces then lead to internal demons, fear and self-pity. To escape this cycle, Josh turns to his vices, sex and drugs. Through the character of Josh Gibson, Schilling demonstrates how the interplay between internal and external forces can result in a tug of war between triumph and defeat that can perpetuate and eventually destroy one’s life.

One way that Schilling establishes this fundamental opposition of triumph and defeat, at the core of Josh’s being, is through an initial description of him. First of all, as he describes Josh’s body, he sets up the first opposition: “Leaning on his massive forearms, he looked up, and his face, almost childlike with its soft features, seemed perched on a body not its own” (Schilling 18). This is the first indication that perhaps he is immature, and not well equipped to handle the greatness that his body could achieve. In addition, this description reinforces later depictions of his childlike need to escape into his vices for comfort.

Schilling continues this mode of description to delve into his character: “He’d been dozing on the ground to get away from the heat and sunlight, and the willow floor was dark and cool by contrast” (18). This statement is significant on two levels. First of all, a second opposition exists in the images of sunlight and darkness. The heat and sunlight suggest one being on fire and becoming a shining star. While the images of the cool and darkness suggests one hiding from their potential greatness. Likewise, Josh hiding under an “old willow tree” (Schilling 16) not only parallels his age, but also suggests his desire to be nurtured and kept safe. This further suggests that Josh is symbolically hiding in the dark because he is afraid of failure. Second, the fact that he was dozing off during a game suggests that Josh has checked out of the game and is not even cognizant that the game is passing him by.

When Bill Veeck tells Josh that he is their “star attraction . . . [and a] legend,” Josh responds with doubt and surrender: “Ah, I don’t know . . . No sir. All I want now is a bottle . . . Josh Gibson’s long gone” (Schilling 18). Indeed, he seems to have given up. However, after Gracie reminds him of his promise to be “on top of the world” (Schilling 18), she starts to feed Josh his bats, which awakens him to action. Symbolically, he settles on the bat, East, which represents his rise again. That is, his rise to action and triumph parallels the rise of the brightest star, the sun.

This first scene with Josh also establishes that his triumphs are many times coupled with defeat. Josh faces negative external forces, such as angry fans
“shouting racial slurs,” a pitcher trying to bean him in the head, and an ump who is making calls that are blatantly wrong (Schilling 20). The narrator states that Josh is used to it, and that the “years of abuse had hardened him” (Schilling 20). However, as the novel progresses, it becomes evident that such abuse has taken its toll on him. Despite his triumphant homer, he is defeated because he was standing outside of the box. Since this is the first experience readers have with Josh, his initial setback does not inhibit him from believing that his promise of greatness is still reachable.

As Josh struggles to perform at the training in Florida, Campy reminds him of the enormity of integration: “. . . I’m just worried, is all. Just want to make sure he’s the best there is. We got a lot ridin’ on you. The whole world does” (Schilling 72). Josh internalizes the weight and responsibility of this situation. Moreover, because he submits himself to fear of failure, he turns to his vices, sex and drugs/alcohol, which then contributes to his downward spiral. For example, on the day of the first opening, Campy finds Josh and Gracie passed out in bed: “The room reeked of booze and sweat. Josh and Gracie lay sprawled across the bed, both naked, a sheet tangled around them” (Schilling 100). Not only does this scene establish Josh’s vices, it also parallels and foreshadows his final downfall that ends in death. For instance, Gene Benson alludes to their future deaths when he asks, “They dead?” (Schilling 100). Clearly, this is foreshadowing because this is exactly how they are found in the end. In addition, the narrator states that Josh “wasn’t anything more than dead weight” (Schilling 101). This statement reinforces the uselessness of his old, abused body, and suggests that he is as good as dead before the season has even begun.

Schilling further develops the connections among the importance of making it in the major leagues, his aged body, and the resultant defeat. Later that morning, Josh remembers his achievements of the past but considers them as a “prologue” (Schilling 103). In fact, he says to himself, “Now when he stoked sixty big bombs the world would shudder . . . if only my body can keep up, I’ll knock this game on its ear” (Schilling 103-4). Through his thoughts, Schilling establishes the opposition of his triumph and defeat. That is, Josh expresses the truth of past triumphs and the hope for future feats, sobered by the reality of his body’s condition.

As Josh steps to the plate, he says to himself, “This is it, slugger . . . this is the ringing of the Liberty Bell, Josh Gibson’s in the big leagues” (Schilling 108). The connection to the Liberty Bell is important because it represents freedom. Josh longs to be free from the constraints of race, the burden of integration, the fight to constantly prove himself, and the painful age of his body. However, these grand hopes are followed by another defeat. In this scene, it is important to note that he uses his West bat. Symbolically, his failure parallels the setting of the sun, which leads to darkness.

Josh continues to experience the opposition of triumph and defeat. After he gets cleaned up from drugs, he performs wonderfully with the Eagles. However, when he joins the A’s again, he faces yet another slump. Succumbing to his self-pity and fear of failure, he sneaks out and hides in the equipment room of Yankee Stadium. As in the beginning, Josh is hiding in the dark, which further establishes his tragic cycle. When Satchel finds him crying in the dark, the reader gains more insight into Josh’s struggles. For example, the reader discovers that the press, specifically the Inquirer, calls him the “Phantom Slugger” (Schilling 255). Certainly, the press acts as a heckler and affects Josh’s game, just as Pete Adelis affects Artie.

Moreover, the reader gains insight through Satchel’s thoughts: “. . . Satch could see that the years of hard living had taken their toll, and Josh wasn’t equipped to handle that reality: it wasn’t just the drugs that were keeping him from hitting, his body was falling apart. If anything, Josh was worse since [the Eagles]” (Schilling 255). This slump is worse than the others because he cannot blame it on anything but himself, and it drives home the fact that he is the reason for his failure, not the drugs.

Finally, Josh begins to rise, with East in his hands, as he practices against Satchel before the game. Later, when Josh steps to the plate, he is faced with negative forces as the crowd “shouted, cajoled, [and] made fun of him. Josh the fatty, Josh the old man, Josh any number of weak swinging, impotent, homosexual invectives” (Schilling 269). With East in his hands, Josh rises above all negative forces to his shining moment and triumphantly hits home run after home run. Furthermore, he hits a homer out of Yankee Stadium, suddenly winning the praise and adoration from both the fans and his teammates. After the game, Schilling notes that it was the first time the press
had talked to him all season (272). At last, Josh has gained his rightful recognition in a major league game.

Following this amazing victory, Josh fails again and again, falling into yet another slump. On the morning of his death, Josh sits, looking out the window at boys playing ball. Schilling uses this moment to reinforce the contrast of his age and the promising youth of his past. Gracie then tries to encourage Josh by telling him, “Don’t worry about this season. They’ll still remember you. Why don’t you go over and play with them, Josh” (Schilling 300). However, Josh responds, “Don’t feel like it . . . Children are cruel” (Schilling 300).

Again, Josh is stuck in the cycle of outside forces, his age, and his internal demons, self-pity and fear of failure.

Cochrane throws him the final oppositional blow when he informs Josh that he is being sent to play in Milwaukee. Up to this point, Josh has continued to have hope that he can still be the best, despite his setbacks. Showing Cochrane his calculations, he claims, “If I play and hit well in the last month, I can show ‘em. I done it before, just last year in fact, so I can do it again. I’m Josh Gibson, don’t you get it? Could have played ‘longside Ruth . . . You can’t send me down, understand?” (Schilling 302). However, Cochrane does not allow Josh the chance to show them, and once again, he is kept from his potential triumph. Thus, faced with ultimate defeat, Josh falls into a tailspin.

The final scenes of Josh’s life become heavy with symbolic images that parallel, or represent his life. For example, Josh walks through the “run-down neighborhoods” and looks “at the buildings that used to stand tall and proud [but] now looked like something big had knocked them askew. You wouldn’t know to walk the neighborhood that it had once been beautiful, a place you could be proud of” (Schilling 302). Indeed, the scenery parallels his life as a ballplayer, because he is now rundown. Furthermore, he used to stand tall and proud, but many forces have knocked him off course. Likewise, he used to be a ballplayer that he and his fans could be proud of. Just as he stands among “an empty lot, [with] broken glass and weeds and dog shit” (Schilling 302), so does he stand among the glory of his past, now littered with broken dreams and overgrown with setbacks.

Finally, he blames himself: “Shoulda taken better care of myself. No one’s fault but my own” (Schilling 303). Ironically, he regrets his drug use as he is buying more drugs. When Josh arrives home, he tells Gracie, “Can’t all be angels” (Schilling 303), which amplifies his final surrender to his personal demons. At this point, he looks up at the sky and sees “nothing but a slab of deep black [for] the city had devoured the stars” (Schilling 303-4). This is significant because it not only represents that he will not reach his desire to be a star, but also confirms that he has been devoured by external and internal forces.

Schilling also uses the description of Josh’s shack to parallel his life. For example, the hamburger wrappers, apple cores, and peach pits that are strewn about, all represent items that are missing their essence. Likewise, all that is left of Josh is a shell of a ballplayer. Moreover, despite the remnants of these items, they are still recognizable by what is left, which forces the reader to picture what they used to look like, as with Josh. Furthermore, these items represent old, rotten trash that will eventually be thrown away, just as Josh was as a ballplayer.

Finally, Campy discovers their bodies in bed, just as before. However, this time they are both dead. It is important to note that as Campy opens the blinds, a sunset is occurring, which parallels the final setting of Josh’s life. Campy also decides to lay West between him and Gracie, and later he is buried with it. This too is symbolically important, as it represents the sun that sets in the West. Just as the brightest star, the sun, must give way to the darkness, so must Josh’s dreams of being the best ballplayer.

Although other examples exist throughout Schilling’s novel, these scenes map out his constant tug of war between triumph and failure. Moreover, Josh’s opposition between external forces and internal demons do eventually get the better of him. Whether it is the press, or the crowd, or the enormity of integration, certainly, outside forces worked on Josh, as he turned to his vices. In self-pity he surrenders to his failure as a ballplayer and embraces destruction. In the end, he was not able to overcome the cycle. The fictional character of Josh Gibson is a tragic example of how constant disappointments can have the power to destroy when they are internalized.

Works Cited

The Wonders of Rock Salt

All throughout time, man has had to depend on the land to help him survive. Today, in our modern society, we remain unchanged when it comes to using what the earth freely gives us. Ohio has been blessed with having many natural resources. A natural resource in Ohio, which is utilized greatly and is often taken for granted, is salt. It is an evaporate mineral, which gets its name from how it is formed. When saltwater evaporates, it leaves an ultra-concentrated salt behind (Marshak 206). Salt, which is just sodium chloride, is usually clear to white in color, and its grains are coarse (Friederici & Carlson 13). Rock salt forms when a lot of salt gathers in a crack or crevice and is then covered over with sediment. After it hardens and turns crystalline, it is later mined out (Marshak 207). In Ohio, rock salt is prevalent, used in many ways, and affects Ohio environmentally and economically.

Ohio has a great supply of salt, and, in fact, has one of the principal Salina Basin rock salt deposits in the country (Dean 74). The rock salt in Ohio has come primarily from Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Wayne, and Lake counties (Carlson 11). Cleveland, in Cuyahoga County, has supplied a significant amount of salt to Ohio, and by 1979, Cleveland had already given Ohio over 500,000 tons of its rock salt (Nordahl).

According to Mark Wolfe, in total, $92.7 million worth of salt was sold in Ohio in 1999 and $105 million in 2003 (Wolfe, “The Ohio Mineral” 3; Wolfe, “Ohio” 90). The major companies which produce salt, as of 2003, are Cargill and Morton International (Wolfe “Ohio” 90). Silurian age rock salt is found in Ohio and neighboring states, and the rock salt found in this area is superior in class, huge in its coverage, and supplies two-thirds of the rock salt in the country (Bleimeister 1243). As one can see, the rock salt industry is big and booming, and rock salt isn’t in demand for no reason. Rock salt’s value and usage is both vast and diverse.

Ohio uses rock salt in many ways. There are over 14,000 uses for salt, some used in one’s own home and others in chemical and industrial ways (Nordahl). Farmers feed salt to cattle, homeowners use it to help soften water, and industries use it to make various products, such as explosives, detergents, and fertilizers (Nordahl). One of the most common things that rock salt is used for is de-icing the roads during the winter months (“Rock Salt Mining”). Because the ice melts faster when it is introduced to salt, it allows for safer, less slippery travel (Dean 72). Without this use of rock salt, Ohio would be up a creek and our everyday travel would be curtailed during the winter months. Since Ohio has fairly hard winters, rock salt is a great commodity. However, one must ask, is the amount of damage caused by the amount of rock salt used during the winter to clear the roadways worth the benefits? Of course, drivers need to be safe, but at what cost to the world around us?

Salt also affects everything it touches—sometimes for the worst. Although there are many useful things that we can use salt to create, it also sometimes hurts more than helps. In the U.S., around thirteen million tons of salt are used during the winter months to ensure safe passage (Friederici). Thirteen million tons is a lot of salt to be slathering all over the roads, and when any compound is pushed upon nature in such high numbers, there is bound to be harm done (Friederici). Cars are rusted through and through, bridges are being eaten away, and many environmental prices have been paid, as well (Friederici). Rock salt also affects animals, the air, the water, plants, and everything it touches (Friederici). Salt’s effect on plants is drastic. Salt dries out plants and makes them unable to take in water, which...
they need to survive. Once plants don't have the water they need, they die. Salt affects water because of run-off from roadways into bodies of water making life unbearable for many animals and vegetation. Also, it has been revealed that in the vicinity of Chicago, salt strength in man-made wetlands, which were used as retention basins, was up to 650 parts per million, whereas normal, ordinary wetlands usually have salt strengths 8 to 20 parts per million. On a similar note, to go beyond 250 parts per million in regular drinking water stores would be unacceptable (Friederici).

Rock salt not only affects our environment, it also affects our economy. Supply and demand is a huge factor when dealing with salt. When rock salt is short, the price goes up. Many counties may or may not have the funds to pay market price because of the high demand for it. Shortages of salt definitely cause problems. The overuse of salt would cause a shortage, and with Hurricanes like Ike and Gustav, it only makes salt shortages worse by causing transportation problems ("Road Salt Shortage;" Antoniotti). In 2007, Ohio bought road salt for $47 a ton, and in some places, people are saying that the fees are three times higher than what they paid last year and are becoming a reality. Some places in Ohio might not have sufficient salt storehouses to readily put salt down as needed in winter of 2008. Because a lot of salt was used in the winter of 2007, salt stores have diminished, and many salt producers are blaming the rise in prices to the greater than before hauling and construction costs ("Road Salt Shortage").

Salt is a great industrial mineral in Ohio that can be used in many ways. Salt is dug from the ground, marketed to make money, and used for manufacturing purposes to make many things ("Industrial Minerals"). Salt is a great commodity that Ohio often undervalues and uses without thinking. In order for salt to be there for Ohio when it truly needs it, it needs to be used wisely and sparingly. Ohio needs to think of its residents, but it also needs to take into consideration its environment, plants, animals, air, and water, along with its economy. Ultimately, balance is the answer. People need to be safe, but so does our earth. Rock salt is a great resource when used responsibly.

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Perception and the Body: A Feminist Critique of Jonathan Swift’s “The Lady’s Dressing Room”

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This essay was written for British Literature 1660 - 1800, taught by Dr. Rooks. The assignment was to write a response paper based on a close reading of a course text.

Feminist theory teaches us how, through traditional gender roles, patriarchy oppresses women. According to feminist thought, biology determines our sex, while society constructs our gender. We are not born masculine or feminine; we are conditioned to be one or the other. It is through social construction that our roles are determined by a patriarchal society. In Jonathan Swift’s “The Lady’s Dressing Room,” we are confronted with the ways in which these gender roles can affect how we perceive other bodies. Swift presents us with a poem in which the gender roles prescribed by society are clearly defined. He re-enforces the stereotypical roles of masculine and feminine bodies. Some might argue that Swift is critiquing vanity; however, the weight of vanity lies entirely on Celia. Strephon is just a poor soul who has been forced to see the truth. Despite his misogyny, Swift’s poem offers us an opportunity to consider the ways in which our perception plays on bodies to show us how they are repressed and how they resist. It also lets us examine how space, both in terms of distance and occupation, influences how we internalize gender. Finally, we see that Strephon begins from a point of gender difference but is forced to confront the lack of gender difference. For, looking into Celia’s chamber pot is like looking in the mirror. So Swift’s poem is not just a critique of vanity, it is a presentation of the violability or inviolability of boundaries; those boundaries being, primarily, the masculine and feminine (Bordo 16).

Before continuing, I’d like to offer general definitions of perception and space. John Locke writes that perception is “…the first faculty of the mind…it is the first and simplest idea we have from reflection, and is by some called thinking in general” (142). So our perception of the body is how we think about the body and it is the “simplest” idea we have of the body. If perception is “thinking in general,” then things outside of our minds can have influence on, or a “direct grip” upon how we perceive bodies in the world. Also, according to Locke, the simple idea of space comes to us through “…sight and touch…” and is the way in which we perceive “…distance between bodies of different colours…” (162). It is through the idea of space that we conceive of distinctions between ourselves and others. It is through the distance between our bodies that we create the perception of difference. It is also through distance and space that things, or “life,” are hidden from our perception or thinking processes. Society and culture play a direct role in shaping our perception of other bodies by using institutions or powers—government, religion, television, education, and science—to tell us how to think about our bodies. Society also takes advantage of distance and space to emphasize difference between bodies, and to keep certain “categories of life” hidden from people.

Susan Bordo, in her book Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body, presents us with the predicaments of the body in a patriarchal culture. She puts it in Foucauldian terms when she writes of:…the “direct grip” (as opposed to representational influence) that culture has on our bodies, through the practices and bodily habits of everyday life. Through routine, habitual activity, our bodies learn what is “inner” and what is “outer,” which gestures are forbidden and which required, how violable or inviolable are the boundaries of our bodies, how much space around the body may be claimed, and so on. These are often far more powerful lessons than those we learn con-
As we see in “The Lady’s Dressing Room,” it is Celia’s daily habits and private parts that Strephon, through his violation of Celia’s space, is “forced” to witness the remnants of. It is through his violation of Celia’s space and the resulting confrontation with the habits of Celia’s “vanity” that makes Strephon come into the real confrontation of the poem, that is the masculine and feminine, and the violability of the gendered boundaries of our bodies. What forces this conflict into being is the “direct grip” that society has on Strephon’s perception and on Celia’s body. Both have internalized the gendered views of society. In particular, Strephon and Celia have been taught what the appropriate body image of a woman should be, though in the poem, Celia is the one who is disciplined for the vain “upkeep” of that image. The fact that the image society projects onto women does not equal what he finds in Celia’s space causes Strephon to break down. He and the reader, as well, see immediately the violability of our gendered boundaries.

We see immediately how Swift, through Strephon, constructs Celia’s anatomy from the objects, bodily remnants, and odors in Celia’s room and attempts to project shame onto her:

And first, a dirty smock appeared,  
Beneath the armpits well besmeared.  
Strephon, the rogue, displayed it wide,  
And turned it round on every side.  
In such a case few words are best,  
And Strephon bids us guess the rest,  
But swears how damnably the men lie  
In calling Celia sweet and cleanly. (11-18)

Every object in Celia’s room, such as the smock, represents a part of Celia’s body. Each body part becomes increasingly disgusting in the eyes of Strephon. Ultimately, we get a picture of Celia as a whole body that is inconsistent with the image that Strephon and society has attempted to project onto her and women in general. When she fails to live up to her gendered responsibilities, she is essentially raped; her private space violated by Swift through Strephon, and made to appear as disgusting as possible by Swift.

It is also through the violation of Celia’s space that we see gendered attitudes in regard to the private space a person occupies. Swift seems to consider himself justified in allowing Strephon to violate Celia’s private space as a pretext for disciplining her for her vanity. In fact, the only commentary about Strephon’s violation is that he comes to hate all women, for, “His foul imagination links / Each dame he sees with all her stinks…” (121-122). He hates women because he discovers that they shit and ooze just as he does. Space plays an important role in how gender is presented in the poem. Not only is it alright to violate a woman’s private space, but the distance from that space determines her goodness. For, had Strephon kept his distance from her space and her private habits, as well as her private parts that each object in the room represents, Celia would have continued to appear as a “beautiful angel.” However, the closer into Celia’s space Strephon gets, the more she becomes a monstrous figure responsible for all the evils of human kind. In fact, Swift’s depiction of Celia is so over the top that it seems to move beyond a satire about vanity into genuine fear and misogyny.

Celia is revealed to us as a disgusting “…nasty compound of all hues…” (41) that “…spits… and… spews…” (42). However, not only is Celia disgusting, she is also vain because she attempts to present herself in the way society requires by using “…washes, some with paste, / Some with pomatum, paints and slops…” (34-35). She is shamed by Swift for this vanity. Wendy Weise writes that “[t]his shaming gesture diverts attention away from the roles of heterosexual desire and capitalism in the commodification of women’s bodies and in the production of commodities that express gender difference” (711). So it is not Strephon’s desire to objectify and possess Celia, but her forced attempt to fulfill and express the desires of society that is shameful. In utilizing shame as a device, Swift removes all the weight of vanity from men and places it entirely on women. Weise also writes of the “matter” that “litters” the room which Strephon presents and clarifies. She writes that Strephon’s enumeration of the room “…emphasizes his gendered difference of perception and the disciplining power of his look” (711). So by placing the shame for vanity on Celia, Swift is essentially disciplining women. Instead of turning his lens on the
Ways in which society thinks about bodies and objectifies bodies, and the fear of what really exists—which is unthought—as well as how society produces boundaries by way of gender construction, Swift re-enforces these boundaries and the accompanying fear through Strephon's "gendered difference of perception." He also seems to imply, perhaps not intentionally on Swift's part, that one is better off not knowing what a body can do.

In *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Gilles Deleuze writes of the attitudes and postures of bodies. He writes of the efforts and resistances of bodies. In an exquisite passage Deleuze states it this way:

The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life. Not that the body thinks, but, obstinate and stubborn, it forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought, life. Life will no longer be made to appear before the categories of thought; thought will be thrown into the categories of life. The categories of life are precisely the attitudes of the body, its postures. 'We do not even know what a body can do': in its sleep, in its drunkenness, in its efforts and resistances. To think is to learn what a non-thinking body is capable of, its capacity, its postures. (189)

What is Strephon confronted with? He is thrown into the categories of life: shit, piss, ooze, and nauseous odors. By violating Celia's space, by entering her dressing room, he is forced to think about what has been hidden from his perception. He is forced to see what is concealed from thought, which is life. Things no longer appear as they once were. He is thrown into the "attitudes of the body," as we see in the "Pandora's box" passage when he plunges the depths of Celia's toilet, only to find the "unthought" that is life. He finds only the resistance of Celia's body to his vain attempts to define "her" body and possess "her" body. Strephon discovers that the body is no longer feminine, nor is it masculine. It is undefined, so it is dangerous, monstrous, terroristic, and a threat to his existence. He is ultimately faced with primarily two ways of being. He can become active and progressive, and embrace the new reality of things appearing as they have never appeared before. He can move forward into life and into thinking that which is "unthought." Or, Strephon can become reactionary. He can choose to embrace fear and the violence of gender. He can choose to reject the other, and hate the other, and therefore, end up rejecting and hating himself. As we have seen, poor Strephon chooses to become the latter, hateful and self-loathing.

I think Swift presents the ultimate scene in which this confrontation with boundaries and the lack of difference is fully displayed in the following passage:

As from within Pandora's box,
When Epimethus oped the locks,
A sudden universal crew
Of human evils upward flew,
He still was comforted to find
That hope at last remained behind.

So Strephon, lifting up the lid
To view what in the chest was hid,
The vapours flew from out the vent,
But Strephon cautious never meant
The bottom of the pan to grope,
And foul his hands in search of hope. (83-94)

The reference to "Pandora's box" implies that Celia is responsible for the evils of human kind. But, as well, her efforts at vanity lure "poor men" like Strephon, unknowingly, into these terrible traps because her vanity hides the truth. Not only are women like Celia responsible for these evils and misleading unsuspecting men, but they also carry them in their bodies, and "spew" and shit them out of their bodies. These evils have been hidden from Strephon by Celia, so she has deceived him, and now he is forced to confront them, though through his own violation. And poor Strephon must "foul his hands in search of hope" by touching Celia's disgusting bodily fluids, which are, of course, all the evils of the world, and for which she must be disciplined for covering up by way of her blatant and deceitful vanity.

But what is really happening here? Strephon has discovered that Celia shits. That she is just like him. He shits and oozes, and spits and spews. If we violated his private space and examined his daily habits, we would find the same disgusting objects and fluids. In this short moment, Strephon is forced not to see the deceitfulness of vanity, but to recognize the other as him-
The chamber pot becomes a mirror. This brings into question the inviolability of boundaries. This is a confrontation between the masculine and the feminine boundaries, and what we see is that these boundaries break down when we are confronted with what lies behind veils. We see what a body can do, what it does do, and that gender cannot define a body, and in fact, places limitations on a body. Strephon becomes unhinged from the “direct grip” of society and culture, and, at least for a moment, is thrown into the position of thinking about what society conceals from thought, which is life.

Does this relieve Swift of the charge of misogyny and mean that he actually hates all people, not just women? I don’t think so. Strephon, in the end, still comes to hate all women. And the moral of the poem, for Swift, is a lesson about the stupidity of vanity and how it lies, rather than a lesson about the violability of the masculine and feminine boundaries or just the violability of the boundary between self and other. If Swift is saying that we are all the same, it doesn’t seem to be a very serious claim for him. For, the weight of vanity does lie more heavily on Celia than on Strephon. Swift’s “disciplining look” is directed more at women than at men. If Swift was serious about our sameness, why didn’t he send Celia into Strephon’s dressing room; to construct his body, enumerate his disgusting objects and habits; and violate his space? Why put the emphasis on women? Also, in terms of distance, the ending of the poem is ambiguous. Does Swift mean to tell us that we should inquire to know more by decreasing our distance to one and other? Or, does he think we are better off not knowing what is hidden from us? This would imply the necessity of boundaries for Swift and re-enforce an argument that he is a misogynist. I think this is left to the reader of “The Lady’s Dressing Room,” but I believe the poem implies we are better off not knowing what is concealed from us. It strikes me as strange that Swift would not make a more clear statement about knowledge at the end considering his obvious interests in science and his satirizing of ignorance. Why leave open any possibility that a reader might leave his poem thinking that we are better off not knowing certain things, particularly regarding women? This makes it difficult to take a sympathetic attitude towards Swift regarding his view of women. The depiction of Celia is so extremely disgusting, it causes one to ask: Is Swift satirizing vanity, and so men and women alike, thereby suggesting the more one knows the better? Or, is he satirizing women, and hence arguing that men should know the truth about women’s vanity so they are not deceived, but the greater distance they keep between themselves and women the better off they will be? I believe it is the latter.

However, despite the misogyny, the problems with the ending, and the satire itself, I think we can discover, or maybe it’s possible for us to create out of the poem, through interpretation, a lesson about the violability of boundaries. When we read Swift’s poem, we, like Strephon, are thrown into the “categories of life.” We are forced to become unhinged from the “direct grip” that society has on our bodies by way of our perceptions and limitations of space, as well as our habits and practices. When we are unhinged, then we are able to think about the body, about what is “unthought,” what is concealed from us; that is life. However, unlike Strephon, we can let ourselves remain unhinged and explore the lack of difference and boundaries through interpretation and experimentation. We can move the poem beyond Swift’s simple satire of vanity and use it to throw ourselves into the possibilities of bodies that can make “efforts” and can resist. We can create active bodies that are free from gendered attitudes and reactive forces, like Strephon, that tried to push back Celia’s body that was resisting his and society’s repression through their idea of what a body, particularly a feminine body, should be. We can embrace the breaking down of boundaries because we truly “do not even know what a body can do.”
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The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language contains three definitions for the word "patronize," two of which are as follows: 1. To act as a patron to: support or sponsor, 2. To treat in a condescending manner, with the latter's etymology pre-dating the previous. The white patronage of African-American artists during the Harlem Renaissance could easily be viewed as a patronizing system of artistic control and limits on literary freedom as termed in the second definition; however, there were some circumstances where the artist refused to be utilized both personally and through their art, but did accept the assistance of patronage so that they could create and be published in a time of deep racial divide in America. The artists knew that they needed not only financial backing, but that, in order to be recognized, they needed the help that only a white upper-class person could bring. This paper will focus on the relationships between Zora Neale Hurston and Charlotte Osgood Mason and of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten and the very different dynamics that those relationships contained.

The early part of the twentieth century was a very difficult time to succeed as an African-American writer; social, economic and especially racial divides made it extremely hard to be recognized. Writers needed to find the time as well as the means to write and be published; they found it necessary to go through the connections and finances of willing white patrons. A major catalyst in bringing artists together with these patrons was W.E.B. DuBois who “...probably did his most important work for the Harlem Renaissance in bringing the large white philanthropic power of the NAACP to the support of black writers by printing their work and offering prizes and criticism to them in the pages of Crisis” (Hart 612-613). However, DuBois was adamant in his beliefs that those patrons and white writers “keep their hand off Negros as subject matter to write about” (613). But it was through DuBois that one of these white patrons, Carl Van Vechten, was able to strike up a long lasting friendship with Langston Hughes.

The two men first met in 1924 at an NAACP benefit party in Harlem, but it wasn’t until Hughes returned from a stint in Washington D.C. and they met again at a formal engagement, that their friendship truly began. Van Vechten was very impressed with Hughes’ work and it was through his recommendation that Knopf chose to publish The Weary Blues in 1926 and Fine Clothes to the Jew in 1927, Hughes’ first two volumes of poetry (618). Van Vechten also submitted the writer’s work to Vanity Fair, “jump-starting the fledgling writer’s career in a way that surprised even Hughes” (Richards 132). Van Vechten, too, was a writer, penning the novel Nigger Heaven in 1926, which he based upon his own observations (and exaggerations) of the African-American communities he frequented (614). But after being threatened with law suits because of songs that he had used in the text, Hughes wrote verses to replace them (615).

The two men corresponded for thirty-nine years, evidence that their relationship fell along the lines of the first definition of “patronize:” to support and sponsor. It was through Van Vechten’s help that Hughes “was one of the first African-American writers to support himself with his own writing...until
his death in 1967, three years after Van Vechten’s demise” (Richards 132). Van Vechten seemed to have a patience, understanding and high regard for Hughes’ craft. His patronage was not about leading or influencing Hughes to write in any particular style; Robert Hart writes, “As for giving direction to Hughes’ work, something that Hughes was accused of allowing Van Vechten to do, there would seem to be little in it” (Hart 618). They did disagree over Hughes’ more “radical poetry, (Van Vechten) never understood the political implications of Hughes’ decision to create folk poetry accessible to the masses...Hughes does not seem to have cared one way or the other whether he satisfied the aesthetic tastes of the cultural intelligentsia to which Van Vechten belonged” (Richards 133). But these differences did not seem to affect the friendship of the two men; they appeared to have more in common in their love for art to let slight dissimilarities get in the way.

Another patron of black authors was Charlotte Osgood Mason, a very wealthy New Yorker who was “fascinated by the elevated spirituality she attributed to ‘primitive’ peoples like Native Americans and African Americans” (Booth 49). Her money went to help the careers of many Harlem artists, but unlike Van Vechten, she liked to obtain a certain amount of decisiveness in their writing and “frequently edited their work” (Booth 50); also, “members of her ‘collection’ were, of course, forbidden from calling her by name” (59). She insisted they call her “Godmother.” Her actions and attitude toward the artists could easily fall under the second definition of “patronize”; her condescending relationships with them had the probability of limiting their artistic imagination and constricted their point of view to fit what she believed it should be. Langston Hughes felt this restriction and asked that he be released from any obligation to her but still maintain their friendship: “she rebuffed him and in the end it all came back very near to the old impasse of white and Negro again...as do most relationships in America” (56).

Zora Neale Hurston was also supported by Mason, but not truly “patronized:” “critics - Hurston’s contemporaries - found her aggressively contradictory and amazingly complex” (Jordan 105). Her relationship with “Godmother” seems more about humoring the wealthy matron and playing a part than actually being someone who was being taken advantage of. Wallace Thurman writes of this in Infants of the Spring when he is describing his obvious parody of Hurston, a character by the name of Sweetie Mae Carr: “She was a great favorite among those whites who went for Negro prodigies. Mainly because she lived up to their conception of what a typical Negro should be. It seldom occurred to any of her patrons that she did this with tongue in cheek” (Thurman 1272).

Even in her correspondence with Mason, Hurston’s comments seem a bit on the cheeky side; she addresses her as “the immaculate conception,” “a glimpse of the holy grail”(Jordan 106) and “dearest, little mother of the primitive world” (Booth 52). Hurston seemed to know how to appeal to Mason’s ego and work it for her own benefit. She knew that she needed the help of a benefactress to pursue her writing and anthropological work, and, by humoring Mason, she was able to do that.

However, her maneuvering did backfire in one instance. In 1927, a year after they had formed their relationship, Mason had Hurston sign a contractual agreement before she would fund a trip to the South for an anthropological research trip; the contract stated that all of Hurston’s research was Mason’s property. “Godmother owned the rights to her research and directed it from afar” (Booth 51-52). Anthropology was Hurston’s passion and the control that Mason had over this particular matter “led to dependency and bitterness” (53).

The role of the white patron was an unfortunate necessity during the Harlem Renaissance. It took not only a lot of money, but typically included a white face and the clout that the combination of the two could bring for black artists to gain the recognition they deserved. While some patron/artist relationships may have been detrimental to the artist, like in the case of Hurston and Mason, Hughes and Van Vechten managed to form a three decade long friendship. However, we cannot assume that Hurston allowed herself to be manipulated completely in her relationship with Mason; she seemed to reciprocate in kind. Although criticized by some, including Richard Wright, these relationships formed a stepping stone on which future writers could begin: “That generation (post Renaissance) did not have, as the Renaissance writers did, to start at zero and prove to a white world that blacks could put pen to paper” (Hart 628). Even though odds were against them through their struggle, Hughes and Hurston managed to stay true to their art, as well as to themselves.
Works Cited


Becoming a Tutor

When Was the Last Time You Got Paid to Take a Class?

What Other Jobs Will Work Around Your Class Schedule?

Who Should Consider Being a Tutor in the Writing Center?

- Any student who feels that s/he would like to pursue a career in teaching or work in a collaborative environment
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- Any undergraduate who is looking for ways to make him/herself more marketable for graduate school or a career.

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Further questions can be answered by:

Contacting Jay Sloan, the Stark Campus Writing Center Director at jdsloan@kent.edu or
Stopping by the Writing Center, Main Hall Room 202 and asking one of your future colleagues!
Why Should You Consider Becoming a Tutor?
Former Tutors Talk About
The Writing Center

Jessica Hudson, Class of 2004:

"After graduating with a B.A. in English in 2004, I went on to pursue a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science. My experiences in the Writing Center prepared me for what I would face in graduate school, as well as in my career at FedEx Custom Critical, where I’m currently employed as a Technical Lead. My division specializes in expediting freight using premium services, such as air charters and dedicated trucks. There are over 600 agents answering these requests and my job is to act as a liaison between agents and management, while simultaneously developing their technical skills. This is especially reminiscent of my time at the Writing Center, since working as a tutor taught me great interpersonal skills, effective communication and how to develop an individual’s strengths. I also work at Malone College on the weekends as a Reference Librarian. Although my primary job is to help students find resources, I also get plenty of questions about citations, structure and writing in general."

Kris Shearer, Class of 2002:

"Following my graduation, I went on to become an English teacher at West Holmes High School in Millersburg, Ohio. Within four years, I was asked by the principal to take on all freshman and sophomore classes because my students, scores revealed, scored higher on the writing portion of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT). Furthermore, each summer I teach writing intervention to those who failed the writing OGT the previous March. To date, 6 of the 6 students I have taught intervention have passed after taking my summer course. I was also asked by the Ohio Department of Education to serve on the state committee that decided the passing score of the writing OGT. Serving as a writing tutor at KSU Stark (2 years as a Senior Tutor), as well as editing the Writing Center Review in 2001 and 2002, greatly influenced my career. Having such experience on my résumé enhanced my attractiveness to perspective employers but, most importantly, gave me teaching experience that few people—even those who do any student teaching—get before entering the classroom."
The Writing Center Review, a multidisciplinary journal that contains selected writing assignments by Kent State University Stark Campus students, is published each spring under the direction of the Writing Center Staff. The purpose of the Review is to highlight excellence in writing representing the various disciplines at Kent Stark, which has included in the past such diverse subjects as Anthropology, Communications, Geology, History, Psychology, and Sociology, to name a few. These assignments may then be used in classrooms, in the Writing Center, and by individual students as guides for achieving excellence in writing. Although students are permitted to submit as many papers as they like, the Writing Center Review is only able to publish a maximum of one submission per author per edition.

If you are interested in having a writing assignment considered for publication in the Spring 2010 Writing Center Review, you will need to do the following:

1. Select a piece of writing you like. This document must have been written for a Spring, Summer, or Fall 2009 class (Please note: anything written in the calendar year of 2009 is eligible).

2. Ask a professor (either the professor who assigned the work or your academic advisor) to nominate your work for consideration. The professor needs to sign his or her name on the proper line of the form.

3. With your submission form, please include one electronic copy of your assignment, saved to a CD. Do not print a paper copy of the document. You may also email your written assignment; however, you must submit a paper copy of your submission form with your professor’s signature.

4. Please include a copy of your assignment requirements in the envelope along with your submission form and assignment disc. If you are unable to find the requirements, write down as much as you can recall about the assignment. Please make sure to write your name, title of document, and phone number on the disc and the assignment requirements.

5. Fill out the form on the reverse side completely. Submissions with incomplete forms will not be accepted.

6. Place submission form and disc copy of your submission in an envelope. Address envelope to the Writing Center, MH202. Place envelope in the fourth floor faculty mail box, or drop it off at the Writing Center. If submitting your assignment copy by email, please send it to writing_gst@kent.edu with “WCR Submission” in the subject line.
Writing Center Review
Submission Form for Spring 2010 Issue

Please fill out the following. Do not forget your signature, which gives the editorial staff permission to print your work in the Writing Center Review in the event that the reviewing committees select your work. See the “Standards for Submission” page on our website, which describes Review requirements. All information below must be provided if your work is to be considered by the selection committees. Please print.

NAME (exactly as you’d like to see it printed if your work is accepted):

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CONTRIBUTOR INFORMATION (Please tell us a little about yourself. This information will be printed on the “Contributors Page” of the Review if your work is accepted for publication):

TITLE OF PAPER:

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT:

PROFESSOR’S NAME, COURSE NAME, & COURSE # IN WHICH ASSIGNMENT WAS COMPLETED:

NOMINATING PROFESSOR’S SIGNATURE:  ___________________  ___________________

(note to professor: this signature indicates that you support the student’s work and recommend it for publication in the Writing Center Review.)

STUDENT SIGNATURE:  ___________________  ___________________

(note to student: this signature gives the Writing Center Review editorial staff permission to publish your paper, if selected, in the journal and on our website)