THE WRITING CENTER REVIEW

VOLUME 14 • SPRING 2010

Selected Writings by Students of Kent State University's Stark Campus

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"There is no great writing, only great rewriting."

- Justice Brandeis

The "Writing Center Review" is a student publication dedicated to writers who have shown proficiency in the writing process throughout their academic undertakings. The 2011 edition contains works by undergraduate authors who have mastered the skills necessary to complete an effectively written research paper. We have included works ranging from freshman to senior status. It is our objective to encourage future submissions from diverse disciplines as well as varied levels of academia to further represent the success of students on the Kent State Stark University Campus.

The Writing Center Staff would like to thank the faculty members listed below who volunteered their time and expertise to serve on the various selection committees.

Professor Peggy Beck
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Congratulations to the students whose work is included in the 2011 issue. Our gratitude is also extended to the numerous talented writers who are not recognized in this year’s issue due to publication restraints.

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Coal Dust Stains Never Wash Out

By Kristen Kolar

Assignment Description: Choose one of three books of poetry that were read in class and write about a topic of your choice.

The word ‘patchwork’ inevitably triggers an automatic mental reaction for most people when they hear it. The typical reaction, probably unsurprisingly, is to either think of the word ‘quilt’, or to simply form a mental picture of such a blanket. When broken into other words, however, it literally means ‘pieced work,’ and could be defined as any collection of several smaller pieces fitted together to form a larger design. While most often used in conjunction with needlework, there could be no metaphor more fitting for the collaboration of voices that come together to tell the story of what it truly means to be a mining community.

In her book Kettle Bottom, Fisher has created a collection of poems that can easily be disassembled and deconstructed individually without losing anything that particular piece has to say. Each piece, or patch, is as beautifully made as the next. Each patch has its own story to tell, and indeed every one of them tells it well, for “these are the stories of the men who descend into the mines and the women and children who wait for them to emerge at the end of each shift” (Macdonald). As brilliant as these stories are individually, none can compare with the collaboration of these voices and the story they tell when brought together into the completed collection, a masterfully designed patchwork quilt.

“Fisher hastens her way to the voices that steer ‘Kettle Bottom’ by electing often to cast her pieces as letters and journal and diary entries” (Parnass), and through such methods, we are able to glean intimate knowledge of the daily struggles that persist in a mining community. We are privy to thoughts that would have otherwise gone unexpressed, and permitted to see an exchange between two people that might never have passed farther that those two, were it not woven into something bigger than they. The thoughts and opinions of the children in the community are more difficult to extract and weave in, but Fisher manages to do this seamlessly by using some of the previously described methods, newspaper interviews, and even book reports.

The first voice we hear belongs to that of Maude Stanley, who is a twenty-three year old woman who recognizes one of her men by a patch that she had sewn on his shirt. Though she does not tell how this man is related to her, Maude describes why the women of a mining town must study their men so closely. Hers is the voice of every mother, daughter, sister, and wife who has found herself powerless to change the circumstances in which her family must live. There is little, if anything, that these women could do except learn how to reclaim whomever the mines took from them. Chosen as the first poem to serve as an anchor, this patchwork square would likewise be embroidered with a bold stitch and color choice, and would be placed near the heart of the quilt.

The next voice that is added to the tapestry is that of an Italian immigrant worker. Though we do not yet know how he comes to be working in this community, his feelings about the work he does in the mines is quite clear. Though the phenomenon known as ‘kettle bottom’ is often given as the reason for mining-related deaths, this worker does not know what the term means. This suggests an unfamiliarity with mining, leaving questions as to why he is working there to begin with. It is through his voice that we are provided an explanation for the term, and his rejection of their definition and subsequent substitution of an expression of his own choosing is telling.

In a different square, on the other side of the patchwork quilt, there is another patch quilted in similar style, as though stitched by the same
Edith Mae Chapman is nine years old and in the fourth grade, and has a couple patches of her own to add to the quilt. Her first piece comes in the form of a diary entry, in which she writes about how she longs for a certain coat, but knows she cannot ask for it. When she gets that coat, she finds a note in the pocket from the previous owner of the coat which says that she, Edith Mae is poor. She decides to keep the note a secret; possibly to maintain the innocence her parents are not ready to give up.

When next we hear from Edith Mae, she is being interviewed by a reporter from New York, who asks her what her daddy says about the strike. She says that she is not to go into the company store, go to school where she would have to listen to the company teacher, or go to church and listen to the company preacher. Literally everything in this town, from the houses to the stores, is owned by the company and can be taken away from the miners any time they were accused of stepping out of line. “And we ain’t to talk to God. My daddy is very upset with the Lord” (Fisher 57). These people have essentially given up hope that there was any salvation in their future.

There is a third square quilted by the same hand, though it would not be distinguishable were the initials of its creator not stitched in a discreet corner of each patch. For although it resembles the other two squares in format, the content is different and the threadwork is of higher quality, as though the seamstress had honed her skill considerably between patches. Edith Mae is again using a diary entry to add her voice, however this time she speaks with a wisdom that was only hinted at previously.
She begins by confessing that her father has scolded her for eavesdropping because, she repeats, “there is things...little girls ain’t meant to understand” (Fisher 61). This comment reveals that her father is aware that his daughter is intelligent enough to understand what she hears when she overhears adults talking. When he explains that “a man...has got to make a stand and say which side he’s on” (61), she agrees that they “ain’t on the side of no scabs” (61), because she knows that is the response that is expected of her. However, Edith Mae admits to the pages of her diary that her true sympathy lies with the trees, which she insightfully points out, have never asked to be on either side, but are brought into the battle anyway. Perhaps Edith Mae can easily sympathize with these trees because she has found herself in a similar position.

There are voices of other children woven in as well, those who have lost their fathers, uncles, or older brothers already, and those still waiting for that day to come. In a mining community such as this, a young boy might hesitate to choose a role model, for fear of a cave in, or some other, equally horrible disaster which would steal his hero away. Robert Davis explains that the company agents evict families “when their Daddy joins the union or gets killed in the mine” (Fisher 69), which is especially distasteful information coming from the mouth of a fourth grade child. The voices of the children are impossible to ignore because they are unable to sugar coat the realities of what living in a mining town is like, the way the adults are able to do in pretense.

There are a couple of flaws in the quilt, notably the square with the slightly crooked seams that was stitched by Walter Coyle, a fifth grader, who has been “a little touched...ever since his uncle Joe...got sealed in Layland” (Fisher 33). Walter’s story is a unique and interesting one due to the extremity of his reactions to a common mining town occurrence. The loss of a family member is something that nearly every person in the town has experienced, yet none of the other quilters have a reaction similar to Walter’s, who “don’t never sleep no more nor hardly eat enough to keep a bird alive, as his mama says” (33). Perhaps most noticeable in contrast is the difference between Walter and other children, who somehow manage to stitch a wonderfully straight seam.

Far away from Walter’s square, and therefore quite unaware of his errant seams, Miss Terry has patches of her own to add. Like Edith Mae she expresses herself through diary entries, though being older she prefers to call it a journal. Miss Terry is the school teacher who has been hired by the company and is therefore expected to be a dislikable person. However, in her first journal entry she begins by describing her “thoughts and nerves and senses” as “pieces of broken glass tumbling in a kaleidoscope” (Fisher 14), which makes an emotional impact right away. Like fancy beadwork that catches the eye, Miss Terry writes in a way that draws the eye to the words that are emotionally charged, which makes her feelings about living in this town easy to translate.

Miss Terry has an important story to relate, one that would be close to the heart of this quilt. Her journal entry in December of 1920 is in keeping with the style of her previous work, however instead of disclosing her own feelings she is narrating an extremely significant event. Following a particularly bad roof collapse, Nathan Stokes was reported missing. His lunch pail was passed through a small opening in the rocks and then through the crowd hand to hand until it reached his wife Gertie. “She did not speak, only turned the bucket upside-down -- the miners way to signal strike” (Fisher 56). Being a company employee, Miss Terry is removed from the emotion of the situation on a personal level, and in this case she is merely describing what she sees.

Interestingly, it is through a square quilted by the hand of a man named Henry Burgess that the truth about the strike is revealed. It is as though he is aware that there are ends of an unfinished story somewhere in these threads that must be tied off in order to keep them from unraveling. He begins by describing his feelings about going back into the mine and his reasons for doing so. He then explains the truth about the strike, using information he was privy to because, unlike Miss Terry, he is not removed from the situation, he is part of it. Gertie Stokes admitted to Mary Burgess that she had not intended to start a strike when she turned Nathan’s lunch pail over the day of the collapse. Mary then told
her husband, who warned her not to tell anybody else so as not to undermine the little bit of pride the strike had generated among the men.

Each patch must be retrieved from whomever stitched it, carefully assembled so as to showcase each the best way possible. Voices get double-stitched and loose threads need to be researched, retied, and wound back onto the bobbin. The Pearlie Webb has been used nearly to completion, for few threads bind as strongly and last as long as she. The seamstress may critique her new creation with satisfaction, for this is no mere vanity spread. Though the beauty of the quilt is obvious, so too are the coal-dust handprints that permeate the fabric, staining the beautiful design with a sadness that cannot be washed away.
The Women Who Wait

By Sheri Spagnola

Assignment Description: Write a paper about a book that was read in class on a topic of your choice.

Author's note: The inspiration to write a narrative prose poem after reading Kettle Bottom by Diane Gilliam Fisher, at first, made no connection with my own more privileged childhood. By the end of the book my thought processes had changed. I decided to write my own narrative poem and explain before each stanza how and why I wrote what I did. All references to inspired poems are from the text Kettle Bottom to simplify the writing. My poem is in Arial Narrow Font to differentiate it from my remarks on Gilliam Fisher’s works and is not indented. My verse is also from the view of a woman seamstress and my observations are from a feminist viewpoint in contrast with the masculine.

In the article, Histories of Feminist Ethnography, as quoted by the author “Edward Tylor addressed the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1884, ‘when he held that “the man of the house, though he can do a great deal, cannot do it all!”’ (Visweswaran 597). I would argue that men were expected to go out to work to meet the strictly physical demands set by societal standards and, yes, men could not do it all, but it is sometimes unclear whether it was by obligations or choice. The women performed the bulk, if not all the rest of the family obligations in the early 20th century also by those same principles.

In this case, I intend to show in a coal mining town how the emotional burden was placed on the women and used the theme of “fabric” from the verse in the book “Explosion at Winco No. 9” (Gilliam-Fisher 7). Women were the ones who sewed, a task that resonated with femininity and “... evokes ideas about thrift, housekeeping, wifely duty, motherly love, and sexual attraction” (Gordon 68). Sewing was a survival skill performed out of economic and social need in the coal mining town and expected gender roles, implying dire circumstances dictate the women had no other choice than to sew, and patch together their clothing and their family (Gordon 68-71).

First, I was inspired by “Pearlie Tells What Happened at School” (Gilliam-Fisher 33), because this touching and highly moving poem broke my heart. It was then I decided to tell my own story of a family with no hope and no recourse to change what direction their lives took. In the second stanza of “Pearlie Tells What Happened at School,” where the little boy brings rocks to school, he asks Miss Terry, his teacher, if a person can get petrified. I saw this not only in the literal sense of Joe Coyle, his father being petrified as rock (in death,) just as a tree becomes a “kettle bottom,” but as a petrification of a woman’s soul, static and unmoving. They become living statues when their very lives are petrified and their actions are automatic and unsurprising. However, an undercurrent of love and beauty runs through this entire chapbook, seemingly defying and (to use a cliché) spitting in the face of fate.

Dirty Laundry: The Fabric of a Coal Miner’s Life

The little boy in a dull white shirt plays outside. He giggles and runs toward a grey-black tree for he must touch it before his sister clad in a formerly lemon-yellow dress catches up with him and he becomes “it.” The game is played almost every day with her in her long brown braids and the legs of a foal just born and learning to walk. She has never caught him before he touches the tree, but today is different. It will rain and he looks up to see the thunderclouds. It is too late. He has been tagged. His face twists to surprise. She is younger and smaller, yet she has done it for the first time. Drops of rain polka dot his
shirt and her dress. He grabs her arm and runs toward their drab home.

When I read the poem entitled, “The Rocks Down There,” the quote, “The rocks down here, they don’t expect nobody to love them and they don’t need need shoes, nor get all big eyed and hungry...” (Gilliam-Fisher 10), the word “rocks” can be replaced with “children,” the boy and his sister in my rendition. Other than household chores, their mother is not able to do much more than love them, at the same time her heart is breaking for what she will not give them—and that is a better life. She feels there is no way out of this prison because the treadmill won’t stop turning. The woman is the one drained emotionally who has to face her children’s eyes each day and at night her husband’s eyes. I chose to use “green” eyes to show there is always a sparkle of lightness and hope in a mother’s eyes and the half-clean clothes represent the lives half-lived.

His mother cannot help but look at her children with sad green eyes for her heart holds only sorrow and grief when she spies their clothes. So young and already their lives are spotted with darkness. She is not able to slow time and the cloth is still half clean. She will never get it back to its former naivety. It will not be clean, not as it once was. This town of misery will swallow both the children, like the dirty wash water drowns the fabric. The clothing comes out a bit less clean each time. Someday the tide of dreariness will take over and nothing will bring the lightness back to their clothes or lives. Only death can do that. Her son’s shirt will be replaced in a few years by a larger one, but not as white or innocent as the one he now wears.

I was particularly inspired by “Dear Diary,” since innocence lasts only so long and someday the children will grow up. They see more than their parents would like. All parents wish they could keep their children naïve about some adult matters as a way of sparing them hardship. Unfortunately, when a child grows up with hardships, they see more than the parent suspects and you only need to ask a child to know the truth. In the line “…little girls ain’t meant to understand,” (Gilliam-Fisher 61), it holds true for both children in my interpretation because both are unaccountable for the circumstances they were born into. The mother wants them to stay in that state, but she knows their purity will not last; it didn’t for her and it won’t for them. Their lives will become rougher and coarser and they cannot stay blameless forever, for they will grow up and recycle the process. Particularly for a girl in a mining town, she will grow up to spend her life taking care of everyone else. The boy will go off to the mines, where his day ends at night. The woman’s domestic drudgery will continue non-stop and the emotional toll will be greater for she is the caretaker.

As the boy grows, his shirt is made of coarser, rougher cotton in the hopes it will last longer, just as his mother prays he too will last longer, but never long enough—never long enough to keep him with her physically. For he can only live forever in her heart.

In “A Book Report, by Pearlie Webb,” one of my favorite poems, the line, “When you give me this book...it means Changes and these stories helps explains why things is the way they are...” (Gilliam-Fisher 25). The mother knows there are changes coming, but not the ones she would want and not soon enough. She knows the changes are greater for her daughter, but not for her son who someday can be released from his prison by death. Her daughter is acutely aware of what is coming for she sees more than she lets on.

The mother also feels her daughter will also outgrow her clothes and her life, but she knows they are trapped in Hell. She knows she can only make her children’s clothes for a time, but not a lifetime. In the future, her daughter’s tiny washed-out dress will become that of a wife and mother and her memory of her own life makes her sad, but mostly angry. Angry enough to tear the man’s shirt she is now mending, her grown son’s shirt, into frayed squares, triangles, and patches, just like the frayed edges of her life.

This next stanza in my prose was inspired by the poem, “Beautiful, the Owner Says.” Even though I portrayed their lives as shades of grey and black, to be human means to have hope. My idea was to show hope through lightness which I saw expressed in the line “But in the dark you see only what glows” (Gilliam-
Fisher 21). There is always hope, but not always light, not if you're a woman in a coal mining town.

Tiny spots of dusty black lighten each night when her husband comes home alive, not well, but alive. She wishes her washing were not such a great indicator of his health. For each day the shirts are greying, just as his life is fading and his once dark hair lightens with time. A time that is rapidly closing in on all of them.

"Jake and Isom" inspired me to write about choices. In the line "Jake was seventeen when he figured he might be done with farming" (Gilliam-Fisher 18). He figures the only way for a man to make a living in a coal camp and better your chances of survival are to sign up with the union. He does not want to see that it puts you on the other side of your life—at odds with the family; he only sees it as a way out of Hell. His mother in my poem sees it as a death sentence for her son, but she is also aware that her son has choices, but not her daughter.

Thankfully there are no more children, no more sons. She could not bear it to scrub or mend any more workshirts. Her backaches would improve if only life were fair. Her son has signed up with the union. His father is proud, her daughter and herself sad. All she can do now is repair more shirts, mend more patches by using larger patches. And even more sewing together of what little is left of their lives.

“My Dearest Hazel” & “Another Book Report by Pearlie Webb,” warned the daughters of coal miners not to marry certain men “...she’d make us promise to not never marry a man who drinks...” (Gilliam-Fisher 9). I feel that a woman who marries a coal miner is not much better off despite how much she believes she loves him and can handle the pall that lies over the town. In order to better understand how women do not have options to marry or not because it would be economical suicide, I felt this quote helped to explain further, “Another Book Report by Pearlie Webb,” states “There’s one advantage women have over men. A woman can go to hell and come back again” (Gilliam-Fisher 65). I don’t consider that much of an advantage when death is the only way out.

Her second child marries today, but her future husband is already married to his ever-changing shirts. She, in the hopefulness of a young woman believes he will be different, but her mother knows he never will. His shirts will only change in tone and hue, but never in cloth. Her mother knows her daughter is pregnant and would if by choice not choose the life of “mending” willingly. Her daughter knows her mother’s heart is as burdened as her own.

When I read, “A Reporter from Boston Comes to Lick Creek,” I felt that in a coal town, the mothers know their daughter’s lives will be the same lives they lived and was succinctly summed up in “We got three babies—two and four and five year old—and this cookpot and this tent and the clothes on our back” (Gilliam-Fisher 73). In my poem all a woman can hope for is a husband, children and hard times. The women pretty much settle to the fact that one day their husbands and sons might not return, much like the sailor’s wife who walks the widow’s peak looking for some sign of the ship that will bring her family back together again.

The day comes, the news expected. Her husband and son are both taken when the mine collapse. There will be no more dust to pound from their ragged clothes, for they have taken them along on their journey. The mending basket is still too full, the laundry yet on the line. She takes the bleak semi-sooted clean shirts and damns them, folds the laundry and puts everything in a basket. The next day she takes the basket to the neighbors. They had three sons and one husband. This time, one husband and two sons came home the same day her husband and son didn’t. The neighbor’s other son is yet too young. She thinks back to her own son at a younger age when he used to play with his little sister. This neighbor’s son will also outgrow his shirts. The day will arrive soon when his clothes become small and he too will start the cycle again. A new shirt. A new life to be destroyed. She dabs her eyes as she watches the boy go out to play, then turns stoically to leave. For now she must help her daughter and new son-in-law. She will be there when her last child starts her own family and watches the shirts change color over the years. She secretly hopes her now only child has nothing but daughters.
Works Cited


The Significance of Kelley’s Island

By Ashley Crisp

Assignment Description: Go to a geologically important site and write a field guide to as to what makes this area geologically important.

Kelley’s Island is a beautiful place to visit. It contains many geological aspects that prove the island to be interesting to geologists and tourists. Kelley’s Island is made of Devonian Columbus limestone, which makes the island abundant in fossils. The island’s cliffs were formed by various types of weathering processes. The most important geological features are the glacial grooves in the state national park. Throughout these passages I will explain why you should venture to Kelley’s Island and visit the historic geological features.

Determining what the Island is made of helps us discover why the Island has certain geological features. In order to understand how fossils, glacial grooves, and eroded cliffs were formed, we need to understand what rock type Kelley’s Island is made of and how the islands were formed. The Lake Erie Islands were formed during the glacial period in Ohio, which left scratches in the bedrock due to the scraping of the ice (Ohio Department of Natural Resources 1). The glaciers that came down through Ohio are responsible for creating the group of Islands in the Lake Erie region. Kelley’s Island is made of Columbus limestone of the Middle Devonian Age, which lies beneath Monroe limestone from the Upper Silurian Age (Ver Steeg 429). This is why the quarry area in Kelley’s island is divided into two sections of upper and lower. The upper region of the limestone is gray to bluish gray limestone that is thin and full of fossils. The Lower region is brownish gray limestone that is thick and also full of fossils (Ver Steeg 430).

The Columbus limestone on Kelley’s Island is abundant in certain types of fossils. The history of the Lake Erie region has an explanation of why so many types of marine fossils were found. During the middle Ordovician to the middle Devonian time period, the island was covered in warm, shallow seas (Feldmann 4). Since this region was covered underwater, many body fossils were found on Kelley’s Island. The Middle Devonian is known for the huge fishes that lived in the waters during that time period.

The fish that was found is called the Onychodus. The Onychodus had very sharp teeth and was a foot long in length (Ver Steeg 431). Today there is still a high abundance of many species of fish. Since Lake Erie contains high nutrient levels and warm temperatures, many types of fish flourished there (Ohio Department of Natural Resources 1). Some species today include yellow perch, smallmouth bass, white bass, walleye, and channel catfish (Ohio Department of Natural Resources 1). The Columbus limestone is divided into two categories consisting of the fossil-poor and the fossil-rich. The fossil-rich region includes fossils that are mostly corals and the fossil-poor region includes many types of colonial corals, rugose corals, rare types of bryozoans, and brachiopods (Williams 326). There were many types of marine life fossilized at the Lake Erie region, but the most dominant fossil found are the brachiopods (Williams 326). Brachiopods are among the most common fossils found in Ohio. They are different in appearances varying from circular to wide and flattened (Feldmann 18).

The Kelley's Island shoreline is also geologically magnificent because it was shaped by moving ice masses and the crashing of the waves against the rocks. The east slope on Kelley's Island was higher up because of the impact of the moving ice blocks (Ver Steeg 423). But, the west shore of Kelley's Island is more resistant to the ice blocks, and its cliffs have been formed from erosion of the crashing of the waves against the rocks and huge blocks of rocks breaking off due to weathering (Ver Steeg 423). The cliffs on the shoreline have different geological features because one was formed by the moving ice blocks, while the other one was formed by erosion and weathering by waves. The east slope of the shoreline was created by glaciers so they have a gentle shore appearance (Snow 25).

The most significant geological aspects of Kelley's Island are the glacial grooves, protected in the national park. Northeastern Ohio has been subjected to several glacial movements during the late Wisconian Period (Szabo 66). These movements are responsible for the formation of the glacial grooves and other geological characteristics of the island. Four movements of ice blocks moved across the Lake Erie basin, thus forming these glacial grooves (Snow 17). The glacial grooves were discovered in the 1830s by miners who were quarrying limestone (Snow 17). Ver Steeg claimed that the reason the glacial markings were so visible is due to the fact that soft texture of the shale had no resistance to the glacier, but the limestone was harder to mark (Ver Steeg 425). There are three factors that are responsible for the erosion of the glacial grooves. Abrasion, plucking from quarrying, and sub glacial
erosion from melt water are the three factors that many geologists believe formed the appearance of the glacial grooves (Snow 17). These three erosion processes are responsible for the physical characteristics of the glacial grooves visitors see in the park preserved today. In order to understand how these glacial grooves formed we need to take a deeper look into what each of these erosion processes mean, and how they work. Glacial melt water erosion depends on how many pores the bedrock has, how strong the rock’s composition is, how fast the melted water is flowing, and how many particles are being removed (Bennett 102). Since shale is a rock that is able to break into thin sheets, it would be rather easy for a glacier to tear into its bedding. Glacial abrasion is when particles at the bottom of the glacier are moved across the rocks surface. This process tears through the bedding and breaks the particles off the rock (Bennett 109). Again, since shale is a rock that is easily broken, particles can easily get scraped away. Glacial plucking, also referred to as glacial quarrying, is when the glacier removes large pieces and particles of the rock’s bedding (Bennett 117). Since the glacier came through the island’s region very quickly, the glacier had high competence and velocity to remove huge fragments of rock, thus creating the fascinating glacial grooves.

For all of the previous geological aspects, Kelley’s Island is a place worth visiting. There are many interesting features one can see by looking at these grooves. By looking at what rocks the Island consists of, we can conclude the history of the Island and encounter why these geological structures could form. By discovering the history of Kelley’s Island we can understand how and why we come across certain fossils, rock types, and glacial structures.

Works Cited


Bullying
By Charlie Dale

Assignment Description: Write a paper that focuses on educational themes

The recent events that have flooded the very fiber of the media with regard to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth have been emotionally horrific on many levels. The events that lead to the decision to take one’s life because of that bullying are far too numerous to try to understand, besides being very private and personal on many levels. Their names however, are burned forever in our minds. Raymond Chase of Providence, Rhode Island, who was nineteen years old when he ended his life; Tyler Clementi of Rutgers University, New Jersey, who was eighteen years old when he jumped from the George Washington Bridge, ending his pain of being bullied and his life; Billy Lucas of Greensburg High School who was fifteen years old when he decided to commit suicide. Seth Walsh of Tehachapi, California, who ended his life by hanging himself when he was thirteen years old; Asher Brown of Houston, Texas, was only thirteen when he put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger, ending once and for all the years of torture at the hands of bullies. These young gay men all share beyond the tragedy of death one common thing; they were victims of bullies and they saw no other way out other than suicide. Were those bullies texting inappropriately all hours of the day, posting vulgar messages on Facebook, tweeting crude thoughts on Twitter, or was there physical violence involved against these sensitive children who feel so deeply different? This leads us to ask how is gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered bullying different from the bullying that their peers experience that could cause them to commit suicide?

What many believe to be a hostile climate that promotes the very essence of acceptance of bullying surrounds every inch of our lives on a daily basis. The preconceived notion of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” that is rampant in the military. Sends the message that we as gays and lesbians are less than our heterosexual counterparts and that we as gays pose a national threat to the very existence of our armed services. The fact that gay marriage is not yet legalized is an additional issue that sends the message that we as gays and lesbians are somehow less, that once again we are denied the rights and privileges of every other person on the planet. What message are we sending our children? Gay adoption is for the most part forbidden by law, when children are in need of loving, caring homes sends the message that we as gays and lesbians do not deserve the right to be parents. You can still be fired from your job in thirty-three of the United States based on your sexual orientation sends once more a “less than human” message to our future generations who will inhabit our workforce (Wendland). Finally, that religion denies gay and lesbians their overall acceptance from not only the church but from G-d Almighty sends the worst message of all that we as gay and lesbians were somehow a mistake and not part of G-d’s divine plan. It is in this environment that many people feel is a trickledown effect that we let pervade our everyday thinking and form our opinions about complete and utter strangers and that by accepting these things we are in many ways condoning the entire notion of bullying as a whole on a national level. While for some people in the public it is taken to the extreme that until these issues are dealt with and made right on behalf of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people that bullying will never go away.

According to research, gay, lesbian, transgendered, and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (Ryan). Can this information
then come as such a shock considering an overall American landscape that tolerates bigotry, misunderstanding and downright hatred? For many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth, the feeling may very well be they have nowhere to turn when bullying happens. Out of the number of youths who are likely to attempt suicide, more than one-third have reported of having already made the attempt to end their lives (D’Augelli). This figure is much higher than national figures of their peers. Actual increased isolation from family and friends pervades many of our gay youth, not counting just the fear of that isolation happening. Signs of depression can and usually are very obvious as well as loss of interest in activities. According to one survey, these factors, with a myriad of many others, can and do lead to a one hundred ninety percent greater chance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth abusing drugs and alcohol compared to their peers (Marshal). This issue for many is a very real issue that could and can play a role in leading gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth to suicide. The combination of factors of rejection, bullying and drugs and alcohol is the final pivotal moment that could lead to a child’s death.

What factors play into this entire atmosphere of gay bullying? Popular opinion believes, and is shown in studies, that bullying starts in the school environment and for many follows them home once school is over. Nine out of ten gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth have been bullied in the past year alone (Ryan). For many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth anti-gay slurs, which are a part of bullying, happen about twenty-six times each and every day or once every fourteen seconds (Chase). Words like “faggot”, “dyke”, “sissy”, “homo”, and others make many feel unsafe in an environment that is to be used for learning. The schoolyard bully of years ago is no longer confined just to the schoolyard, but follows the victim home in the form of abusive text messages, abusive Facebook behavior, reprehensible Twitter behavior and vulgar instant messages and creates an environment of twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week non-stop torture. This kind of cyber bullying could continue without a teacher ever being aware of it because a student’s phone is turned off, is also an issue and why many have made rules in regards to where exactly children keep their phones at school.

Within a hostile school climate, gay, lesbian bisexual and transgendered youth report that 84.6% of them have been physically harassed and 18.8% have been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation within the past year. This number by itself is beyond staggering, but when it comes to gender expression, the same group of kids reported that 63.7% had been verbally harassed, 27.2% had been physically harassed and 12.5% had been physically assaulted. These types of bullying and harassment have remained relatively constant for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth (Kosciw). Within this very environment many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth feel unsafe, unwelcomed, and many opt to skip school entirely, which in the larger picture causes their grades to suffer. These circumstances may also lead to other concerns with regard to these at risk youth. This includes but are not limited to expression of negative attitude toward themselves, expression of hopelessness and or helplessness, giving away valued possessions and depression.

While for some gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth, the bullying may not be from a peer but from their parents or other adults. Adults are to be the safe haven that a child can turn to in their time of crisis, and for some that cry for help leads to further bullying and overall prejudice. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth who come from highly rejecting homes of their “life style choice” are eight times more likely to commit suicide than their peers (Ryan). How does a child even begin to tell a parent “Mom, Dad I think I might be gay” when deep down Johnny or Susie knows Mom and Dad will never understand and accept them. When that fear is compounded into its own form of bullying by name-calling, mental abuse, physical abuse and throwing the child out of the home, where now are Johnny or Susie to turn? It takes tremendous courage for a child to face a parent after more than likely months or
years of agonizing, do I tell Mom and Dad “I think I might gay, can we talk about this?” For many parents, grandparents and other authoritative adult figures a child may turn to talk to about sexually natured themes may in fact be dreaded by those adults. How do I even begin to talk to Johnny and Susie about sex as a whole? Does the average parent even think about their child being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered in the first place? If this even happens, what preconceived thoughts, ideas, moral teachings do we as parents bring to this conversation that may prevent us from being completely open, honest and frank about sexuality as a whole.

According to several surveys, four out of five gay, lesbian bisexual and transgendered students say they do not know one single supportive adult in school (Sessions). Also we know that when students, teachers, school faculty and school administrators look the other way when bullying happens it is only compounding the issue and making it worse. If children got the support they needed from their school faculty or had an openly gay teacher, they were more than likely to feel as if they did belong in school (Kosciw). That is why one organization called The Trevor Project is doing everything they can to provide our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth a safe space by providing for schools free of charge the Trevor’s Survival Kit. A kit of invaluable tools to help teachers and community leaders to create a safe, affirming space that can save the life of a child. A movement that will not only make our children safer, but will empower them to survive these moments of anguish that they receive at the hands of bullies.

On September 19, 2010, Wendy Walsh, a single mother, came home to find her middle son, thirteen-year-old Seth Walsh, dead after hanging himself in a tree in his own desert town backyard (Forde). Police reports indicate Seth was found on the ground unconscious and not breathing. The report further indicates that CPR was administrated and Seth was airlifted to Kern Medical Center (Ethan). Seth had just transferred into an independent study program after only two weeks of school. Seth was put onto life support for over a week before his body gave out and he peacefully died on September 27, 2010 (Forde).

The Tehachapi Police Department at this time is continuing an investigation into issues of bullying because of one instance of reported school bullying, where the perpetrator was suspended. Earlier this month in September when the Tehachapi news reported Seth Walsh’s death, there was also a mention of school bullying but many feel that the school turned a blind eye. Tehachapi police investigators who interviewed some of the young people who taunted Seth the day he hanged himself determined that despite the tragic outcome, their actions towards Seth did not constitute a crime and criminal charges were not being pursued. “Several of the kids that we talked to broke down into tears. They never expected an outcome such as this,” said Tehachapi Police Chief Jeff Kermode (Saeyang).

Seth’s grandfather, Jim Walsh, a former principal and four-year retiree of Mojave High School, has gone on record as saying, “He is not satisfied with the police investigation” (Elliot). Many feel the same way. Mr. Walsh, that despite all of the information, despite the crime committed justice will never be served in regard to your grandson Seth, and that this issue will not go away until we as a society demand that changes are to be made and made immediately.
Works Cited


The Mystic Journey of the Cat: A Mythological Criticism of the Cat in Contemporary Literature

By Jason Sharier

Assignment Requirements: Choose a short-story author or a theme that connects three or more short stories around a predominant topic/approach.

Whether it be mythology, legend, folklore, fairytale or history, felis catus, the cat, has long inspired us, and continues to inspire us by conjuring up within our imaginations a strange fascination that may very well be instinctive on our part. And as we start looking back at the mythological portrayal of the cat, from thousands of years ago up to some of the most contemporary portrayals of the cat within the short-story genre, let us first begin with some examples from antiquity that demonstrate the variety of mythic cat-archetypes that we’ll be analyzing as we peruse through the symbolic depths of the cat’s presence in contemporary literature.

As early as 4,000 years ago, the cat began its assimilation into the culture and religion of the ancient Egyptians. Its domestication created an unnatural (or supernatural) bond with the inhabitants of Egypt. And Bastet, the cat-goddess of protection, fertility, and motherhood became a goddess not only worshipped in temples but whose presence was to become an essential part of the household as well. Etymologically, the Egyptian word for cat is mau (also thought to be derived from the onomatopoeic “meow”); it is also believed to stem from the verb miw which means “to see” (“Origin of the Word Meow” para. 1). And embedded in the light of its divine-like eyes, the cat is speculated to have been, if not semi-divine, a being deserving of reverent worship nonetheless.1

Continuing the traditional religious view of the sacred identity of the cat, in the latter Islamic culture it was rumored that when the “Prophet Muhammed went to put on one of his robes, he found his cat [Muezza] sleeping on one of the sleeves. Rather than disturbing the cat, he cut off the sleeve and let him sleep....It is also believed that when the Prophet Muhammed gave sermons within his household he would often hold Muezza in his lap” (Nizamoglu, para. 17).

As well, it is stated elsewhere that, “all good Hindus were expected to take care of at least one cat during their lives” (“Cats in other religions” & Choron 19).

In the ancient religious traditions of Burma Aand Siam the cat is considered to be an integral part of the soul’s journey, the “crossing over” into the Afterlife. In the legend of Sinh– who becomes the first Birman cat– it states, “that each Sacred Cat carries the soul of a priest on its final journey to paradise” (Boroff, para. 4). Likewise in Siam, when a prestigious person died, the soul was thought to be received by a cat; that cat then became a guardian of the royal temple, and “[o]nce they became temple cats, they...could intercede for the soul of the dead” (“Histories and Legends of the Siamese Cat” para. 4).

On the other hand, “[i]n 1233 Pope Gregory IX...actually denounced black cats as satanic,” and with the cat population diminished because of extermination, o ensued the tragic plagues of the Middle Ages which were caused by an overpopulation of vermin; the most ironic and the most terrible being the “Black Death”—a type of symbolic Karma (“Cat Mythology: Cats as Familiars” para. 3).

And from this handful of examples we can begin to see how the cat has been looked at with a certain duality. Therefore, the symbolism of the cat from the archetype of the sacred cat to the archetype of the unholy cat can even be conceptualized as a type of yin and yang.
Some other notable cats appearing throughout different myths and tales are the Norse goddess Freyja's cats Bygul and Trygul, the Roman cat-shape-shifting goddess Diana, the Cai't Sith of Scotland (having inspired Poe's “The Black Cat”), Shakespeare's Graymalkin from Macbeth, Wordsworth's “The Kitten and the Falling Leaves,” Lewis Carroll's beloved Cheshire Cat, and T.S. Elliot's Jellicle Cats. In addition, within J.R.R. Tolkien's mythological legendarium there exists a myth that tells of the origin of enmity between cats and dogs; it appears in the early manuscripts of The Tale of Tninivel where the cat Tevildo, “Prince of Cats,” (an early manifestation of the Dark Lord Sauron) and the hound Huan of Valinor (Land of the Gods) battle, where afterwards their struggle ends with: “Little to Huan’s liking was it that Tevildo lived still, but now no longer did he fear the cats, and that tribe has fled before the dogs ever since” (29). Admittedly, and without a doubt, the cat embodies a certain mythos which continues to baffle and entertain the human imagination.

Furthermore, in relation to the Chinese Zodiac, there’s a clever tale about how there came to be enmity between the Cat and the Rat:

Once upon a time the Jade Emperor gave an invitation to the animals to become representatives of the twelve calendar years. The Cat and Rat had been best friends but the Rat realized that surely the Cat would be chosen over him, so he devised a plan. The Rat, instead of waking the Cat from his nap, let him be, and the Cat slept through the election; therefore, “this is the reason why cats are not one of the twelve animals [in the Zodiac] and they love to chase after rats” (“Chinese Zodiac Stories” para. 4).

However, the Cat did make it to the Vietnamese Zodiac!

From symbols in the stars to symbols within, the famous Swiss psychologist Carl Jung in considering the cat as an archetype gives it the title devious cat (a symbol of the self-serving nature) (“Jung's Archetypes”). Though, in a more general sense, the cat has lived up to the “curious cat” image more poignantly. Cats further permeate the nature of the psyche in that “[p]eople often describe themselves as being a ‘cat person,’” which has become a sort of personality type in and of itself (Ireland, para. 2). In addition, cats also appear as important dream symbols: “As mysterious, aloof creatures, cats symbolize the intuition, and when they appear in dreams they may be asking us to use our intuition more, to rely on our gut feelings and instinct” (para. 3). Also a distinction can be made between the feminine and masculine nature of cats in dreams: “In a woman’s dream, a cat may indicate feelings of sexual prowess,” and in a male’s dream “[t]hey may symbolize the anima, or the feminine side of man’s psyche” (paras. 4 & 5).

And because of the meditative qualities of the cat, in Japan there’s a Buddhist proverb that says, “Neko mo Bussô arî. / In even a cat the Buddha-nature exists” (Hearn 185).

The cat also makes an appearance in the Tarot on the Queen of Wands card where the cat in conjunction with the Queen symbolizes:

“magic, restorative power, renewal/rebirth, singular focus, feminine power/Goddess energy, discernment, regal/nobility, curiosity/exploration, nurturing/protecting, cool/collection, watchful, and independent” (Venefica, “Queen of Wands Tarot Card Meanings” para. 2).

AMoreover, the cat symbolizes for the querent “that there are energies at work that [they] may not be aware of, but [they] can certainly tap into” (Venefica, “Cat Symbolism in Tarot” para. 14).

As well as being a symbol of the mind, the cat is also a symbol of the mind-body relationship. In the exercise practices of Yoga, imitating the cat through the Cat Pose (Bidalasana) “teaches you to initiate movement from your center and to coordinate your movement and breath” (“Yoga Exercise - Cat Pose (Bidalasana)”).

As a collective myth, we (at least some of us more than others) are bound to the mystic journey of the cat in some way or the other. From ancient times to the present day we continue to follow them through our psychological and spiritual peregrinations which are projected into our literature through the symbolism of the cat and reabsorbed back into our daily lives by the very presence of the cat itself.
We may or may not be just as curious about the cat as much as the cat is inherently curious in general.

Furthermore, short-stories about cats all tend to draw upon the symbolic treasure trove of the cat as portrayed throughout mythology. Therefore our preconceived ideas about the cat should have some sense of depth and substance to them before we begin to explore the mythological paradigm, and mystical tangents, of the cat as a literary symbol within contemporary literature. Thus, this is why the introduction to this specific quandary must be exhaustive as we endeavor to unveil, and recreate the monomyth of the cat.

The short stories "Dominion" by Christine Lucas, "The Poet and the Inkmaker’s Daughter" by Elizabeth Hand, and "Healing Benjamin" by Dennis Danvers all exhibit the use of magical realism in their portrayal of the cat, and throughout all of these works the cat appears as the embodiment of this phenomena; it is a being from the Secondary World of fantasy, but somehow it exists within the Primary World—for this reason the cat has become an important symbol of the imagination. Therefore, meeting a cat is like meeting a being of the Fairy race, or at least maybe the pet of such an ancient race as the Elves for it doesn’t take much to see that cats do in fact exhibit certain high-Elvish qualities: poise, grace, and mysticism. The cat bridges two worlds for us; therefore, the cat is “master of two worlds.”

In “Dominion,” Lucas recreates the origin of the cat through a satirical reworking of the plot in Genesis 1-3, while drawing on a wealth of meaning from the Hebrew Myth. However, she cunningly devises a new twist to the tale, which is where the cat comes in.

Lucas herself said that she had gotten the inspiration for her short-story from Hebrew folklore, which according to one tale: On Noah’s Ark there arose a vermin infestation and Noah prayed to the LORD, and in response to Noah’s prayer, the Lion sneezed and thus the feline was born. Lucas’ conclusion was this: “when God gave Man dominion over animals, cats were not included in the deal” (415).

Starting off, one of the unique qualities that her narrative exhibits is the use of artistic device in reworking the characterization of the Serpent. Where one would normally expect the usual devil-archetype to be associated with the Serpent as Satan, the Serpent is actually not Satan/Lucifer but merely stands in as the “trickster.” In addition, the Serpent is rewritten as a feminine character—the anima of Prometheus² or Loki.³

In the beginning of the story, the Serpent is anxiously bored and quite perturbed by the bland utopian atmosphere and decides to try entertaining herself by tempting the animals with thoughts of mischief and murder. After failing to tempt the lions to feast upon the lambs, she arrives at an epiphany, “[c]urled around the Tree of Life, the Serpent decided that Creation needed fun-mischief-creatures. She had watched Him do it from clay with the humans. How hard could it be, especially with the aid of the forbidden fruit” (Lucas 416)?

The Serpent then begins her first act of sub-creation, summoning forth golems⁴ of her own design:

She gathered a pile of soft soil from around the roots of the Tree of Life and curled around it, kneading it and shaping it to the best of her ability...

She had made the male bigger and thick-headed, with fast claws and toxic urine to leave his mark all over Creation. The female was more delicate, but faster and fierce when defending her litter.....

She grabbed a fruit squeezing it over the creatures, anointing them. ‘I give you the knowledge of Good and Evil...go forth and multiply...until your offspring overruns Creation’ (Lucas 416)

So the Serpent created the cat, male and female, she created them.

And as we can see there is more to this particular section than just plot because part of it is also comprised of an interweaving of social-commentary regarding actual population problems which, presently, various adoption shelters and programs such as TNR are attempting at best to provide an answer for.

Furthermore, Lucas reveals her literary intent in this scene as she offers this commentary:

‘close observation of any cat will make it clear that cats possess Knowledge of
Good and Evil. Just watch them as they shred the toilet paper or knock over your potted plant. They know they’re not supposed to do that. They just don’t care (Lucas 415).

Shortly after the kittens come to life, “[t]hey curled by the Serpent’s coiled body and fell fast asleep, their whiskers and tails twitching in dreams of hunt and mischief” (Lucas 417). In this scene particularly, Lucas makes use of an interesting allusion or parallel, because the cat in actuality does bear a certain resemblance to the serpent: it coils up to sleep, its eyes are serpentine, it lusses, and it slinks in movement. Lucas sums this up a little bit more when she says, “Their creator could only be a trickster, shaping them after its own image” (Lucas 415). The dichotomy of the serpent and the cat is also portrayed in Egyptian mythology as the sun-god Ra was said to take “the form of a cat as he went off on his nightly battle against the serpent Apopis” (Choron 12). This, however, is a portrayal of enmity (where Lucas does the reversal of this); though despite this effect it shows how their images (or the animals themselves as symbols) are recurrent as a type of mythic motif. In Norse myth, there is also an account where the World Serpent, Jörmungand, is changed into a cat by Utgard-Loki, whereby Utgard-Loki then challenges Thor to lift the cat (“Jörmungandr: Lifting the Cat”). And according to a Japanese Buddhist legend “the cat and the mamushi (a poisonous viper) failed to weep for the death of the Buddha” (Hearn 185).

However, after the cats appear in the Garden of Eden we come to find out that it wasn’t the Forbidden Fruit that was Eve’s first temptation, for “the kittens had warmed up to Eve. She brought them milk and they rubbed their backs against her legs, played with her hair and curled on her lap, purring” (Lucas 417). And as readers we might even begin to sympathize with Lucas’ Serpent in her motherly endeavor to find a caretaker and guardian for the kittens.

Next, God, accompanied by Lucifer and a host of angels, unexpectedly interrupts the conversation being held between Eve and the Serpent. God quickly rebukes the Serpent for her act of creation, and questions Eve, “Have you not a mate, woman?;” then He commands the Serpent to call the cats forth, whose reply is, “Even if I do, they won’t obey. I forgot to include obedience when I made them,” to which God nonchalantly replies (in parody), “Of course you did” (Lucas 418). God’s final decree is that the kittens be removed from the Garden of Eden because they had been exposed to the Forbidden Fruit becoming like God or “like gods” knowing both Good and Evil. So the cats become strays, which is somewhat symbolic of the couple in Genesis 3 who choose to become like “strays.”

In the last episode the Serpent is tormented by her loss so much so that she devises her most cunning plan yet—the kittens must have a guardian: “Eve! I have something for you,” and the rest is history (Lucas 419). We also learn at this point in the story that the “crazy cat lady” isn’t just a modern invention, but one that has ancient roots that go all the way back to the first woman!

Thus, “Man has no dominion over [cats] and they come with the forbidden knowledge” (Lucas 415).

The cat can also be representative of a type of test created to humble Man. This is alluded to in Lucas’ story, and is found elsewhere as part of another Hebrew tale (rumored to be found among the Dead Sea Scrolls):

After a while it came to pass that Adam’s guardian angel came to the Lord and said, ‘Lord, Adam has become filled with pride[...the] Dog has indeed taught him that he is loved, but no one has taught him humility.’

‘No problem!’ said the Lord. ‘I will create for him a companion who will be with him forever and who will see him as he is, who will remind him of his limitations, so he will know that he is not always worthy of adoration.’

And God created the Cat to be a companion to Adam. And Cat would not obey Adam (Choron 28)

Lucas’ reworking of Hebrew myth and lore surrounding the cat may be summed up best by the words of Ellen Perry Berkeley, “As every cat owner knows, nobody owns a cat” (“Cat Quotes”).

In the next short story, “The Poet and Inkmaker’s Daughter,” Elizabeth Hand draws from Japanese folklore in her depiction and characterization of a Japanese bobtail-cat named
Kury-ri. The Japanese bobtail also plays an important role in Oriental culture through the image of the maneki-neko (the "beckoning" cat) popularized as a symbol of luck and good fortune, appearing in storefronts and on shop countertops.

In the beginning of Hand’s story, we’re introduced to Ga-sho, who is a poet living in medieval Heian, (Japan) in “a tiny room in the very darkest quarter of the city” (280). Ga-sho spends his time writing poetry about a maid,—Fair-Flower—which is the name he gives her, having no knowledge of her real name—who is in the service of the Dark Willow Empress. Though having seen her only once, she is portrayed by Ga-sho as the fantastical element in his poetry; however, contrary to his delusion, she is not the beauty on the inside that she seems to be on the outside.

Though, “[p]oor as he was, Ga-sho kept a cat. She was a fastidious creature, bobtailed as cats of that time and place were, with pale grey eyes and black front paws.... The most remarkable thing about her was her color: a strange deep reddish brown, the color of new bronze tinged with blood; just from this description alone we can begin to see that this particular cat is enchanting in more ways than one juxtaposed to Fair-Flower, because there’s more to Kury-ri than meets the beholder’s eye (Hand 280).

Kury-ri is also his only companion, but she proves to be more than just a simple pet; “the red cat slept beside Ga-sho and kept him warm at night. In the morning, she gently woke him up by nudging his cheek,” and when they ate, they ate together; for example, Ga-sho always saved an appropriate amount for her, and likewise when Kury-ri brought home fish from the docks she shared it with Ga-sho (Hand 280).

Kury-ri’s role, furthermore, reveals that she is playing the part of the guardian-angel archetype, because realistically it is she that watches over Ga-sho, instead of vice versa. She also symbolizes the distance that stands between Ga-sho and the feminine element because she is a present feminine symbol but she does not satisfy the role of human female companion; she represents the lack thereof of the role of the woman or, more so, she is a foreshadowing of the redemptive quality of the anima (or Mother archetype).

Furthermore, the portrait of human and animal draws upon the underlying human necessity to be in communion with Nature, which is a vital part of what we might presently label “pet-therapy.” This communal relationship is essential to the powers that shape the world of mythology—the attempt at regaining our connection with the life of the earth, and all that lies beyond. And in relation to this point, as far as the cat is concerned it seems to anthropomorphize itself (or at least we could possibly perceive it as such): Kury-ri for example.

However, the conflict of the story is that the inkmaker, from whom Ga-sho purchases his ink, a drunkard who severely abuses his step-daughter, Ukon. This is also a reversal of the typical fairytale format, because the evil stepfather fills the character role of the usual evil stepmother. And because Ukon’s mother passed away, she was left to slave away under her stepfather’s cruelty making sumi ink day in and day out. Moreover, the unknown element of the story is that Ukon has befriended Kury-ri, thinking her a stray, and has been feeding her; and when Ga-sho meets her to purchase more ink he finds out about Kury-ri’s secret errands.

After his first impression of Ukon, Ga-sho returns home and instead of writing about Fair-Flower he begins to compose poetry about the inkmaker’s daughter, comparing her to Kury-ri; and soon enough, “his thoughts began to move from feline virtues to more feminine ones” (Hand 283).

Later that evening, Ga-sho notices that Kury-ri isn’t around, but doesn’t think anything of it. Simultaneously, back at the shop the inkmaker was returning in one of his drunken stupors, and he began to strike Ukon out of sheer spite and malcontent. However, the eucatastrophe (the sudden turn from tragedy) of the narrative emerges, and the plight of both the hopeless romantic and the damsel in distress is changed forever by the hidden powers that govern the lives of humankind. The next thing Ukon realizes, upon regaining consciousness after her beating, is that the shop is on fire, and there’s a woman, somewhat resembling her mother, standing in front of her calling to her, “‘You must come with me..... This way!’ she hissed; grabbing Ukon’s wrist, she dragged her out into the street.....Her breath...smelled of rotting fish. ‘Your life there is
over... Don’t look back again” (Hand 284-285). Lastly, the strange woman leads Ukon to Ga-sho’s, and Ga-sho takes her in. “Here,” the woman said, bowing as she gestured at the door. ‘Here you will find safety,’ and suddenly the woman disappeared” (Hand 285).

Eventually, after some time, Ga-sho and Ukon are wed; they have a baby due; and live happily ever after with Kury-ri and her new litter of kittens.

In analyzing “The Poet and the Inmaker’s Daughter”, both Ga-sho and Ukon are characters who are anti-heroic in their endeavors, whereas, it is Kury-ri who is the heroine or goddess like figure of protection like the Hindu goddess Shashthhi, who rides upon a cat, or the Egyptian goddess Bastet, both of which are goddesses of motherhood and protection. The cat’s attribute of being associated with the primordial archetype of fire also enhances Kury-ri’s mysticism as the fairy-cat, with the fire symbolizing purification and a new beginning.

Hand, at the end of her story, reveals the source of her inspiration for the characterization of Kury-ri: “In medieval Japan, red bobtailed cats were known as Kinkwa-neko, ‘Golden Flower.’ They were thought to assume the forms of beautiful young women, and to help young girls in distress” (286). She also alludes to “an original tale about a cat whose tail caught on fire: the panicked cat ran through the streets, setting houses aflame in its wake. It’s descendants to this day have no tail” (Hand 279).

In addition, through the influence of anime, presently, the Neko has even developed into a fantasy race of half-human—half-cat beings who exhibit shape-shifting powers and other magical attributes—literally becoming an integration of the symbolic nature of the cat with the human nature, giving new meaning to the phrase “cat people.”

Lastly, in the short-story “Healing Benjamin” by Dennis Danvers the roles of companionship and “magical realism” are explored in and through the mythological quandary of Death—the enigma of our existence. Danvers himself said that his story is a byproduct of dealing with the pain of becoming attached to animals whose life expectancies are but a small shadow of our own. He quotes, “[w]riting ‘Healing Benjamin’ helped me put that pain [of his own animals deaths] out there and deal with it in both laughter and tears;” therefore, reminiscing over a lost love through resurrecting it in writing can become a type of mythological psychotherapy that enables one to come to terms with the mysteries of life in hopes that some of them might be unlocked (Danvers 430).

The story begins with this opening scene: I got the healing touch when I was 16 years old kneeling over my dying cat Benjamin in my bedroom. He was trying to crawl under the bed to die, but I wouldn’t let him, hauling him out and wrapping my body around him, my forehead pressed against his.... He’d stopped breathing, his heart stopped, and I prayed for him, picturing him raised from the dead.... Benjamin stirred under my hands, his heart beating hard and steady against my palm (Danvers 430-431).

After this miracle takes place, the cat has even reversed in age, gaining his youthful vigor back. Here Benjamin’s miracle somewhat reflects the cat and its nine lives, (which is a belief that may have been influenced by the concept of the Egyptian Ennead where the nine gods are embodied in a unity of one).

Most importantly, in the beginning of the story, the miracle reveals this one epiphany which continues to gather power as the story progresses: “[Ben] pointed out, however, that death was a necessary precondition to resurrection” (Danvers 432). Thus, the mythological quandary of Death is that it’s just another part of the overall journey.

Regarding the structure of the story, the opening plot operates like a flashback that brings one suddenly into the present with only snippets and fragments of the past. The narrator’s first marriage doesn’t work out, and now at the age of 46 (making Ben 47 in human years) he meets his new love interest, Shannon, who seems to exhibit a special bond with Benjamin. However, one of the minor conflicts of the plot is that the narrator (Jeffrey) is attempting to keep Benjamin’s secret from Shannon despite the different vet notices appearing in the mail. After avoiding it as long as possible, they end up making appointments, and each vet is baffled by Benjamin’s health. And because of Shannon wanting further evidence she makes Jeffrey arrange a visit with his parents to...
secure more proof. Jeffrey, thinking that Shannon might even think he was crazy, finally became convinced that she wasn’t going to up and leave, because she herself had finally come to believe that he had some kind of healing power. And if the idea of an immortal cat wasn’t enough, Jeffrey also had another secret: Ben talks.

The characterization of Benjamin in the story is unique not only in the symbolic sense but also in the development of personality. Like most pet lovers, Jeffrey talked with Benjamin; unlike most beloved pets Benjamin talked back to Jeffrey. Also, another unique quality of Benjamin’s is the fact that he is a cat who relishes in humor: “He played dead and sprang back to life, a favorite trick of his, flicking his smartass tail” (Danvers 432). Elsewhere in “literal” conversation with Jeffrey Ben further reveals his comedic nature: “‘Oh please. Does [Shannon] sense you’re a manipulative little eunuch?’ ‘For a cat, I’m not so little.’ He laughed at his own joke. Cat humor, very sly” (Danvers 434). With a witty personality, and a smile “like the Buddha” Ben seems to anthropomorphize himself quite uniquely through his mannerisms (Danvers 435). (Jeffrey and Ben’s relationship is also reminiscent of Darby Conely’s “Get Fuzzy” characters Rob and Bucky in relating the anthropomorphistic characteristics of pets.)

The miraculous nature of a 47 year old cat also produces a religious conundrum for the narrator, which serves as the sub-text, “What possible use could God have for a cat who had so little use for Him? I’ve always wanted to believe but never quite pulled it off except for transitory spasms of awe—what most people call agnosticism” (Danvers 436). Likewise, he later faces his earlier religious conundrum with the idea that “God might have a plan, in which case [he] was sure [he] couldn’t do anything to screw it up, lacking any clear instructions otherwise, but if God had no plan, [he] did not feel obliged to come up with one other than the status quo: Everyone dies. That’s the way things are. Except for Ben” (Danvers 441).

Nearing the close of the story, Jeffrey’s relationship goes away with Shannon because of his failure to willingly try using his powers to heal her brother who had been in a coma from a car accident; his parents pass away, and he and Ben spend the rest of their years traveling the world together. Lastly, because of old age they come to reside in Catemaco, Mexico—a lake town which is teeming “with cats and brujas [witches]” (Danvers 445). While taking up residence in Catemaco, Benjamin befriended a mystical woman, Hermalinda. And in the last scene of the story, as she brews a special cup of tea for the both of them, Jeffrey confesses to Benjamin, “I’m afraid,’ .... ‘I know,’ he says. ‘Everything will be alright. I’ll be joining you. Walk like an Egyptian.’ He laughs at his cat humor, very sly, but I don’t get it” (Danvers 445). As they both drink the magical tea, Jeffrey with his cup in his hand, and Benjamin sipping from his saucer:

Ben stops purring, and a moment later, his heart stops, and he’s gone just like that. He’s tricked me—knowing where he leads, I’ll follow—fleeing the unbearable emptiness of this world without him—he’s shown me the way. Some day has finally come. Everyone dies. Even Ben. For me (Danvers 446).

The story leaves us in the final moment to reflect on the heartwarming fact that the cat chose to die for him. And the phrase to walk like an Egyptian is finally realized as they go on into the Afterlife together.

As we end these three stories, what else might there be to say about the cat, and how many more references can be made through literary analysis? Lucas brings out the cat’s untamable and independent nature, Hand reveals its inner magic, and Danvers brings out the spiritual bond between human and cat. However, it is the actual act of living beside a cat which speaks more than a volume’s worth surrounding the mythos of the cat itself. And lastly, I shall leave the reader with a few thought-provoking quotes: Andrew Lang considered, “Of all animals, [the cat] alone attains to the Contemplative Life;” as well, Sir Walter Scott remarked that, “cats are a mysterious kind of folk. There is more passing in their minds than we are aware of,” and reflecting on the clairvoyant nature of the cat, Eleanor Farjeon comments, “It always gives me a shiver when I see a cat seeing what I can’t see” (“Cat Quotes”).

Cats reflect the spirit-nature as our guardians and companions; they reawaken the world of wonder and magic.
Notes

1 Marie-Louise von Franz recounts an interesting interpretation of the spiritual implications of mummification through citing an old Egyptian papyrus text: The text states that after a certain point in the ritualistic process the body is thereafter referred to as “this God” when the corpse is meant. [The text] says: “Now put [such and such an ointment] onto this God,” etc.” (77). She also goes onto reveal that “mummification is designed to give the deceased the quality of eternity and divinity; it is divinification and immortalization of the personality, but every step is carried out absolutely concretely” (77). And within recent years, National Geographic has discovered that “the mummification techniques ancient Egyptians used on animals were often as elaborate as those they employed on the best-preserved human corpses” (Owen, para. 2). The point that I want to further here regarding the Egyptian tradition is that the spiritual implications involved in animal mummification and human mummification can be looked at as equally symbolic. And with over 300,000 cat mummies unearthed in Bubastis alone, it would seem that the Egyptian Afterlife is most likely an ideal heaven for cat-lovers.

2a Greek Mythology: one of the Titans. He stole fire from heaven and taught men its use. Zeus punished him by chaining him to a rock” (World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary, 1554).

3a “[T]he Norse god of destruction and mischief, the brother of Odin. He was imprisoned until earth’s last battle” (World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary, 1147).

4 According to Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah): “The sages regarded knowledge of ‘the letters according to which Heaven and earth were created’ as an instrument lending mortals the power to engage in acts of creation” (Steinsaltz 250). The legend of the golem (creating man or animal from clay) is directly related to this belief.

5a “Attributing human form or qualities to gods or things,” or otherwise in this particular portrayal the cat can be considered as theriomorphic (which means “gods in animal form”) (World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary, 86).

Works Cited


EPA Procedures for Remediation of Contaminated Groundwater at the Superfund Site – the Industrial Excess Landfill of Uniontown, OH – Are Called Into Question

By Patricia Catherine Cotter

Assignment Description: Write a paper about a local water issue using the subheadings included in the paper.

Summary

This paper discusses the importance of uncontaminated groundwater to sustain life on Earth, the contamination of groundwater by toxic wastes dumped at the Industrial Excess Landfill in Stark County, and the ineffective method chosen to clean up the site, including a proposed solution of what should have been done in the early nineties. I chose this topic because I was concerned about the safety of drinking water for the residents of Stark and Summit counties and, in particular, the safety of my family who lives in Uniontown.

Background

Because most countries are not industrialized, the majority of the Earth’s inhabitants (not restricted to humans) rely on surface or groundwater to keep them alive. When water is polluted with contaminants, the health and life of organisms are threatened. Since the Industrial Revolution, the likelihood of mass pollution has dramatically increased. Prior to this, water was polluted by natural processes like defecating in the water or burying people too close to a water source. As we discover more chemical processes for mass production, we need to find a safe way to dispose of the waste we create. Fortunately in America there are laws to protect our citizens and the environment, but the abundance of Superfunds, hazardous waste sites across the country which have been targeted by the federal government for cleanup, reveal that the laws either came too late or were lightly enforced.

People in the least industrialized nations are vulnerable to companies that wish to industrialize them “for their benefit.” They are not necessarily protected by environmental laws.

When fish begin to die in their rivers and people come down with diseases that their tribes have never seen before, will it even occur to them that their “benefactors” are taking advantage of lax regulation and polluting the water that sustains them?

Industrial waste is poured directly into the water, or the contaminants are assisted by rainfall migration when the rain penetrates the soil and carries harmful chemicals and metals to the collected groundwater. The groundwater is not stationary and remains unseen as it transports the contaminants for miles. Since groundwater travels, the effects of pollution can extend beyond the obvious boundaries of a dump site. The groundwater surfaces via well or spring as drinking water for the populations living within the region.

Local Aspect

The Industrial Excess Landfill (IEL), located at 12646 Cleveland Avenue in Uniontown, OH, is a 30-acre site that accepted industrial, chemical and commercial waste from area businesses, in particular – the rubber industry, between 1966 and 1980 when it was shut down by the courts. In 1984, it was designated a Superfund. As much as 85% of the land is covered by waste materials (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.2). Groundwater had become contaminated, and contaminants were found in residential wells when testing was done in 1983 (Office of Technology Assessment, 1988, p.41). Also, methane gas was building up and migrating to surrounding properties, risking explosions. A methane extraction system was immediately put in place. In 1987, concern over the presence of vinyl chloride in area residential...
and business wells prompted the installation of air-strippers to cleanse the water (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.2). Another emergency measure was to tie surrounding homes into the public water system from North Canton to prevent health risks to the residents (Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, 2006, p.2).

Waste was unevenly distributed across the site – from two to 60 feet deep. The greatest concentration of waste is in the northwest corner (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.4). Neighboring wells were closed, and thirteen families were relocated (Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, 2006, p.2). The eastern side of the landfill was the least affected, because wastes were not dumped there due to the low-lying topography, the dampness of the ground and high water table (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.4). The Metzer ditch is located on the eastern side of the site and water from it eventually flows into the Tuscarawas River, a wildlife habitat that serves the recreational, farming and industrial needs of the community (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.14). Groundwater flows from the site to the west on a downgradient, and these are the homes most affected (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.4).

A past employee has testified that there are drums buried on the site whose contents could not be dumped. Most of the wastes were dumped from drums which were then returned to their owners (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.4). According to Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, Charles Kittinger, former owner of IEL, testified in federal court that the government used IEL as a burial site for plutonium 238. The concern over the spread of groundwater contamination is due to the fact that around 30,000 people live within three miles of the landfill and 600,000 could potentially be affected by it (Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, 2006, p.2).

The worst contaminants found in the wells used for monitoring were benzene, vinyl chloride, and dichloroethane. These contaminants exceeded the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) established by the government. Both benzene and vinyl chloride are known carcinogens. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.4-5). Both substances rank high on the 2007 CERCLA Priority List of Hazardous Substances – vinyl chloride at number four and benzene at number six (Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry, 2007, p.1). Uniontown citizens have witnessed “clusters of cancers, birth defects and unexplained illnesses and deaths” (Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, 2006, p.1).

Considering the seriousness of the health risk to residents of Uniontown and the surrounding areas, it is surprising that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chose to remediate the site using “monitored natural attenuation,” allowing rain to soak the ground and carry harmful chemicals into the groundwater for thirty years. Across the country, twenty-two methods of remediation are being used at Superfund sites with success. “Monitored natural attenuation” is rarely used by itself and never used without removing the wastes first (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Citizen's Guide to Monitored Natural Attenuation, 2001, p.2).

The groundwater was tested for radionuclides in the early nineties and in 2000 to 2001 at the request of concerned citizens. There was only one off-site place tested, south of the landfill, that exceeded the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for radionuclides (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Ombudsman Report, 2004, p.7). Contractors for area tire and rubber companies conducted the tests. There is some dispute as to whether the testing methods were adequate, so the citizens remain skeptical (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Ombudsman Report, 2004, p.11).

Melvyn Gascoyne, a registered professional geoscientist from Canada, prepared a report for the EPA delineating his reasons why the tests for radiation done in 2000 – 2001 were too insensitive to distinguish whether a source of radiation was natural or caused by the dumping. Some examples of his objections are: 1) that the testing of samples was done too quickly, taking less than three hours to count for plutonium rather than days, 2) that mass spectrometry
should have been used to analyze for uranium and plutonium rather than alpha spectrometry, and 3) that electrolysis should have been used to detect man-made tritium. Even though the testing revealed groundwater to be below maximum contaminant levels for drinking, Gascoyne was concerned that there may be radioactive waste buried in sealed drums at the site that are not currently leaking but pose a threat (Gascoyne, 2004, pp.31-32, 42-43).

The EPA is satisfied that the groundwater in Unintown is not radioactively contaminated (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Ombudsman Report, 2004, p.10). Furthermore, the EPA insists that it can no longer detect a contaminant plume (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Ombudsman Report, 2004, p.7) – much to the consternation of Unintown’s populace who, thirty years later, are still unconvinced that all was done that should have been done.

Proposed Solutions

The EPA has published The Citizen’s Guide Series to inform the public about twenty-two remediation methods used to clean up Superfunds across the United States. The EPA chose “monitored natural attenuation” for the Unintown Superfund, taking thirty years to accomplish what, I think, could have been done in a shorter period of time. According to A Citizen’s Guide to Monitored Natural Attenuation, this remediation method depends upon microbes, dilution, evaporation, and the tendency of some chemicals to meld with soil particles (sorb) which keeps them from mobilizing. These processes occur naturally and do not require man’s assistance. “Monitored natural attenuation” is most effective when the contaminated waste is removed first. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Citizen’s Guide to Monitored Natural Attenuation, 2001, pp.1-2). The EPA adopted this remediation method, but I was unable to find any references that showed an effort by the EPA to remove wastes from the landfill - only references by the Concerned Citizens of Lake Township that the EPA was relying on dilution to clean up the site (Concerned Citizens of Lake Township, 2006, p.2).

When searching for alternatives, I was interested in the solutions that moved groundwater through tanks to clean it, such as “air-stripping” and “activated carbon treatment”, but I didn’t know how practical they were, because the site is thirty acres and might require too many structures to be built.

Rainfall results in groundwater. If we can prevent rain from coming in contact with hazardous waste and causing harmful chemicals and metals to migrate into the groundwater, we can clean up the site quickly and efficiently. This would require making the ground impermeable to rain. There were three remediation methods that are currently being used at Superfund sites to create these impermeable barriers. They are “capping,” “solidification / stabilization,” and “vitrification.” My choice for a solution was “capping.” According to A Citizen’s Guide to Capping, “capping” consists of covering slightly more than the entire site with layers of different materials for different purposes. First, the site is leveled. Then, a layer of clay is laid over it. Next, a synthetic geomembrane covers the clay entirely. On top of that is a layer of gravel which is covered with topsoil. The topsoil is seeded and planted to prevent erosion. Provision is made for venting methane gas and to keep the topsoil separated from the gravel. The simplest cap can be made from asphalt – like building a giant parking lot. The old Hoover building off of 77 near the Akron/Canton airport (now the home of Faith Family Church) sits on over 36 acres of land, giving us an idea of the size of the proposed cap. A cap does not rid the landfill of its contaminants. It just contains them and prevents any water from coming in contact with them. The cap can be built in months and requires inspections to assure that it remains impermeable (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Citizen’s Guide to Capping, 2001, pp.1-2).

In A Citizen’s Guide to Solidification / Stabilization, another method for making the soil impermeable is presented. The basic idea is to mix cement and lime with the contaminated soil. The cement will harden, and the lime will change harmful metals into metal hydroxides – more sluggish compounds than metals. With this method, the contaminants are also contained. It is low cost and can be accomplished within
months. I prefer “cappping” to this method, because I have witnessed cement driveway corrosion and wonder how long this method would last (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Citizen’s Guide to Solidification/Stabilization, 2001, pp.1-2).

The last suggestion for creating an impermeable barrier is found in A Citizen’s Guide to Vitrification. “Vitrification” involves melting the soil with electrodes so that the contaminated soil transforms into a block that resembles glass. This may not work, because the landfill was a former site for mining sand and gravel. I can imagine sand turning into a glass-like substance, but I picture it interspersed with big chunks of gravel. This method takes months also (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Citizen’s Guide to Vitrification, 2001, pp.1-2).

After I decided to choose the “capping” method for the Industrial Excess Landfill, I read the 1989 EPA Superfund Record of Decision regarding the site. To my surprise, the initial recommendation for remediation included “capping.” In fact, “capping” was compared to “natural attenuation,” and the conclusions were that, although it cost $864,000 as compared to the $18,548,000 price tag of “capping,” the “no action” method was “not acceptable to the state” (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.6, 8, 10). “Capping” and “no action” remediation methods were subjected to nine criteria. The most important criterion was its effectiveness in protecting the environment and sparing people in Uniontown from unnecessary health risks. “Capping,” coupled with a system that cleansed the groundwater and vented methane, was considered superior to the “no action” system which allowed rainfall to continue to pass through wastes and contaminate groundwater for an indeterminate length of time while residents waited for the contaminants to dilute to an acceptable level for drinking. Another consideration was that the “no action” solution would not prevent the mobility of contaminants, whereas, “capping” would immediately stop the mobility of contaminants as soon as the cap was completed. At the time of this decision, the plume of contaminants had reached 1000 feet to the west of the landfill (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Ombudsman Report, 2004, p. 7). The only two criteria that the “no action” remediation method satisfied were that it costs less and takes no time to begin (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.8-10).

The EPA would argue that “monitored natural attenuation” is not the “no action” method described in the 1989 EPA Superfund Record of Decision (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Citizen’s Guide to Monitored Natural Attenuation, 2001, p.2). They would defend their position by citing that they have provided an alternative water source for residents, continue to monitor and test samples of groundwater collected in wells for that purpose, and that they have installed air-strippers to cleanse groundwater (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.2). However, they have done nothing to prevent water from passing through the wastes and have prolonged the cleanup by decades.

The proposed remediation of IEL included a cap, a methane venting system, purification of groundwater by “air-stripping” and “activated carbon treatment,” including lowering the water table, and directing surface water runoff into the Metzer Ditch. The highest areas of the site were to be leveled. The cap would have a two to three foot clay layer, protected from shrinking by a synthetic layer. It is imperative to use this synthetic layer in the Midwest because clay swells and shrinks in our climate. A foot of gravel was to be laid over the synthetic layer, covered with geotextile fabric that prevents topsoil from mixing with the gravel. The last layer would be grass-covered topsoil. The land would be angled so that run-off was directed toward the Metzer Ditch to the east of the site (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.14-15). The water table would be lowered by pumping the groundwater (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.7). However, once the cap stopped rainwater from entering the landfill, the groundwater would naturally lower with little or no pumping (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.17-18). Gas extraction wells would be installed to relieve any pressure buildups from naturally produced gases that
would threaten the integrity of the cap (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, p.16). The initial groundwater would need to be cleansed by forcing air or activated carbon granules through it. Then it would be redirected to the Metzer Ditch until levels for safe drinking were reached (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.12-13). Had this method been adopted, I feel confident that this Superfund would have been removed from the National Priorities List in the nineties.

References


would be sufficient to detect the integrity of the cap (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1985, p.16). The initial ground water would need to be cleaned by forcing air or activated carbon granules through it. Then if it would be redirected to the Meteor Ditch until levels for safe drinking were reached (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Record of Decision, 1989, pp.12-13). Had this method been adopted, I feel confident that this Superfund would have been removed from the National Priorities List in the meantime.

References


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THE WRITING CENTER REVIEW

https://digitalcommons.kent.edu/wcr/vol16/iss1/1
Writing Center Review

Submission Instructions for Spring 2012

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 2012 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 2012 class (Please note: anything written in the calendar year of 2012 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. Print one clean copy of the document, without your name anywhere on the document. Your title must be clearly stated on the first page.

4. Please include a copy of your assignment requirements in the envelope along with your submission form. If you are unable to find the requirements, write down as much as you can recall about the assignment.

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

6. Place submission form in an envelope. Address envelope to the Writing Center, MH202. Please note: you must include an electronic copy of your submission, either in the envelope or by email to writing_gst@kent.edu with "WCR Submission" in the subject line. Place envelope in the fourth floor faculty mail box, or drop it off at the Writing Center.
Writing Center Review

Submission Form for spring 2012 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):

ADDRESS:

PHONE: EMAIL:

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: name date

(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: name date

(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)
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(name date)

(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: ___________________ ___________________

(name date)

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