A showcase for undergraduate students at Kent State-Stark who achieved writing excellence.
Letter from the Editors

The Writing Center Review is a student publication dedicated to student writers who have shown excellence in their writing assignments at Kent State University at Stark. It is compiled, edited, and written by students with the help of the faculty on campus. The Writing Center Review is truly a place for students to showcase their talent and to also learn from their peers. The writing showcased in The Writing Center Review also exemplifies the most important goal of writing and writing assignments—to engage in a dialogue with the academic world.

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A Whisper
By Kelly Mook

Compare Walker Percy’s discussion to your own situation by comparing what he says to your own travels or to your experiences in a course, or both. This assignment was completed for Dr. Keith Lloyd’s College Writing II.

There is a subtle whisper in creation. Its essence entails beauty, mystery, and complexity. It is often unheard, and the object in which it speaks of is often not seen by those who do not stop to embrace it. We are often perplexed, busy, and preoccupied with mundane, trivial affairs that constantly call for our attention. We are too busy rushing around on the beaten path to see the beauty in it, and even to begin to see outside of it. And for beings that have an innate nature to appreciate beauty, we do not allow the opportunity to see it in our lives. Once this beauty is grasped, looked upon, and appreciated, life finds meaning and peace.

Walker Percy in his work entitled, Loss of the Creature, unfolds the argument that we have lost our sovereignty to truly appreciate the “creature” (468-486). This creature is the beauty, complexity, and essence of the object at hand. It is the whisper that softly speaks of the value of the object before us. Our sad estate is due to the fact that we did not discover the object ourselves, but rather the object was explained to us based on another’s observation and study. As a result, there is no longer a mystery in the object before us because it has already been defined for us. Where there is no mystery, there is no curiosity to explore.

After the object is explained, shown, defined, and answered for us, we develop an image of the object in our minds. Percy calls this preconceived image the symbolic complex (469). We form an idea or image in our minds based on the observances, advice, pictures, or studies of other people without actually having seen, experienced, touched, or discovered the object ourselves. As a result, when we are actually confronted with the object, we no longer can see it for what it is and appreciate it. Instead, we compare it with the image we have formed in our minds. He extends this argument further and writes, “Why is it almost impossible to gaze directly at the Grand Canyon under these circumstances and see it for what it is—as one picks up a strange object from one’s back yard and gazes directly at it? It is almost impossible because the Grand Canyon, the thing as it is, has been appropriated by the symbolic complex which has already been formed in the sightseer’s mind” (469). When the actual sight before us does not perfectly align with the image in our imagination, a subtle discontentment or disappointment creeps into our hearts. Percy states, “Where the wonder and delight of the Spaniard arose from his penetration of
the thing itself, from a progressive
discovery of depths, patterns, colors,
shadows, etc., now the sightseer
measures his satisfaction by the degree
to which the canyon conforms to his
preformed complex” (469). We then
become people who do not see with our
eyes but see with our minds.
All hope is not lost for the one
who yearns for the creature though.
Percy offers several solutions for the
sightseer to regain his or her
sovereignty. He suggests that the
sightseer leave the beaten path that is
the most walked upon, most
photographed, most explained, and the
most expected (470). It is the path
where the subtle whisper is not heard
and the creature is not seen by most of
those who tread on it. However, he also
suggests that there is hope for the
beaten path. If a sightseer sovereignly
walks on a level above it, he may
discover the lost creature (470).
Thus begins the story of my own
journey of discovering the path less
treaded on. It was on this off beaten
path that I discovered the creature and
regained my sovereignty to hear the
subtle whisper in all of creation. It was
through walking off the worn-out path
that I was able to appreciate the beauty
of it.

The inner itch for a different way
started during my junior year of high
school. Education became a procedure. I
was so concerned about my grades that I
forgot to enjoy the material that I was
learning. For example, my English class
read through William Shakespeare’s
play, *Romeo and Juliet*. I thought the
play was incredibly dull because I was
reading it in order to understand the
correct meaning of it. All I was seeking
from the play was a correct answer in
order to get a good grade. While I
anxiously tried to figure out what the
experts understood and saw in the piece,
I lacked the sovereignty to appreciate
the beauty, talent, and skill this play
possessed.

The drive for the correct grade
stemmed a lot from my own
perfectionism, but it also stemmed from
the set-up of our education system.
Lesley Rex, in her article entitled, *Loss
of the Creature: The Obscuring of
Inclusivity in Classroom Discourse*
discusses how the implementation of
standardized testing has changed the
learning environment (30-46). The
classroom setting no longer provides the
flexibility and freedom for students to
interact, discover, and relate to the
material taught to them. The teachers
now have the pressure to teach children
to think and respond to material in ways
that would get them a good test score.
As a result, children are told how to
think, write, and respond, and they are
taught that there is a definable standard
for academic success. This standard
discourages independent thought,
creativity, and genuine connection with
the material (30-46). She states in her
article, “What if their students are
struggling with the kind of student they
need to be, or with the role of school in
their lives? What if they don’t believe
they need to talk, read, or write in the
ways the high stakes tests imply they
should? What if their students don’t
have any experience with or interest in engaging in the classroom’s discourses of achievement? What classroom conversations are lost and what opportunities for inclusion disappear when much of the talk is about reading and writing as they appear on the test” (39)? The creature is found in the conversations that allow the students to wrestle, engage, question, and apply the material to their own lives.

English class was not the only class in which I overlooked the beauty in the subject matter. I willingly ignored the whisper that the Shakespeare piece, the mathematical equation, the United States’ history lesson, and the science experiment continually called out. I grew weary of the busy-ness, pressure, and dryness of the beaten path of education, academics, and sports. It became an unending treadmill of relentless responsibilities, stresses, and pressures. It seemed more like a prison than a place of great beauty. I could not stop long enough to enjoy the people, relationships, and beauty surrounding me every day.

I came to the conclusion that this beaten path is consumed with unending striving and performance. Our culture tells us that it is not only acceptable but expected of us. Life is about going to college, starting a career, buying nice things, and retiring. Not that those things are not good or beneficial, but it creates a people who become like hypnotized mummies walking through the motions. We do not make our own decisions but make decisions based on the expectations of other people. We choose to take on responsibilities such as college because we feel we should rather than because we want to. And in the midst of our busy-ness and striving, we lose the beauty in life. We lose the sovereignty to appreciate not only school but also our humanity. We cannot stop ourselves long enough to question our reasons for our constant striving, to discover who we truly are, to enjoy the present moment, to be present with people, to fully delve into our interests and loves, and to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us each and every day. In a way, we allow ourselves to be told what life is and to ignore the subtle whisper that is constantly calling to us in the shadows.

Senior year of high school finally came, and I was inundated with conversations about college. It was the beaten path and often portrayed as the only route available. However, I wanted to explore outside the parameters of college. I was weary with education and had no appreciation for it. I felt uneasy with the definition of life my culture had given me. I had heard the whisper faintly in the distance, and it stirred more and more of my curiosity. It offered the possibility of another path of freedom and one which became incredibly captivating. It forced me to forget the expectations of others, leave the beaten path, and redefine life outside of my culture’s definition.

This whisper led me to a tiny school called Nicolet Bible Institute in White Lake, Wisconsin. They taught courses on the Bible which sparked my desire to know the Author behind this
book. As I read into Scripture and spent time observing the beauty in the simplest objects, I found the source of this small whisper. It was not through a definition or explanation but with a seeking, observant, and quiet heart that I discovered it. This whisper spoke of the beauty, mystery, complexity, and greatness in all of the created things around me. The cause of our awe in the sight of a Grand Canyon is in the fact that there is a complex, mysterious, glorious, and beautiful Creator behind the workings of these masterpieces. Creation contains an essence which strikes us, confronts us, and pierces our hearts with the understanding that there is something higher and greater than us. Now, the simplest rock or a setting like the one below had significance and meaning because a Majestic Being had created it and set it into motion.

I resonated with the words of David when he wrote, “O LORD, how manifold are your works! / In wisdom have you made them all; / the earth is full of your creatures” (English Standard Version, Ps. 104:24).

The uneasiness, emptiness, and unrest I had felt during my high school years had finally found peace. I had finally discovered life and freedom, and I found that in the Creator. Only by getting off the busy and restless path to stop and observe the world around me did I discover and possess this knowledge and understanding.

As I continued to understand the value and beauty in a tiny fish or a beautiful starry night, I discovered more about the Creator behind these art pieces. He was even more intricate in his construction of me as he was the sunrise I watched and the lake I swam in. He not only had complete knowledge of me, but desired me. As I spent more time with this Creator, the more I loved Him as my Father. I experienced His compassion, care, love, and grace in ways too deep for words to convey. John Berger in his article, Ways of Seeing, discusses how the perception of art is changed through reproduction, knowledge, and atmosphere (134-167). He begins his passage by saying, “When in love, the sight of the beloved has a completeness which no words and no embrace can match; a completeness which only the act of making love can temporarily accommodate” (134). My experience of this Creator could not be contained in words, for they were empty explanations of His greatness. My only reaction to such a being was to spend more time in His presence, appreciating the things He had created, and seeing
His handprints in even the most mundane and simplest things of life.

Education could not fully teach me about where true life and freedom is found, and how to appreciate the beauty in even the simplest invention. The off beaten path allowed me to regain my sovereignty to truly see the world and its beauty. However, it also developed an appreciation within me for the well-worn path of education. Percy writes that the creature “may be recovered by a dialectical movement which brings one back to the beaten track but at a level above it” (470).

I could then appreciate the beauty in education because I saw my Creator in it. He gave us minds to understand, He created the concepts in which we study, and He laid the groundwork for us to discover, understand, study, and appreciate His creation. The beauty in it is that we will never fully unravel the mystery and beauty that surrounds us. We will always, as long as we are here, have a mystery to solve and a new thing to discover. I was finally ready to tread the well-worn path of college, however in a much different way than before. I could see that as I learned more about the world and what others have discovered about it, I was learning more about its Creator. I entered college with the sovereignty to see the beauty in the complexity of a cell, the workings of the human mind, the intellect to write an essay, and the intricacy of a fetus in the womb. I had finally found the lost creature.

Works Cited


Take a concept from Abnormal Psychology and conduct a literature review using at least 10 relevant references to write an APA format paper. This assignment was completed for Dr. James Shepherd’s Writing in Psychology.

Abstract

Transitioning to adulthood is a stressful experience for many young adults, especially when attending college is added into the transitioning process. Due to unique environmental factors that college students face, susceptibility to mental illness is common among this population. The purpose of this research paper is to discuss mental illness among college students and describe what makes this group unique in relation to mental health. The main points of this paper discuss that college students are an at-risk population for mental illness, certain groups within the college student population have an increased risk of developing mental illness, and the treatment rate for mental illness among college students is significantly low. For the mental health of college students to improve, students, parents, and colleges and universities all need to address the issue of mental illness and take action to reduce the risk in this population.

Keywords: college, university, students, mental illness, mental health, risk, treatment

Introduction

Soon after graduating from high school, many students are buzzing with excitement about beginning new chapters in their lives as young adults. Some graduates may go straight into the workforce, but many young adults in the country today attend a college or university after high school. College years are known as the “best years” of life, allowing students to explore their identity, assert their individuality, and find their place in the world. The transition from high school to college allows students to drift away from life at home and toward life as an adult. Despite the fact that this is normally a smooth transition for numerous students, stress has become commonplace during college. Students may find that becoming an adult is a role they are not ready for quite yet. Often students are performing a juggling act with the responsibilities of classes, organizations, homework, studying, jobs, and relationships. With an enormous amount of pressure to succeed, stress has become the norm for college students. This stress makes students susceptible to a growing problem among the college population: mental illness.

Mental illnesses are conditions that can range from inconvenient to debilitating for countless people in the United States every year. According to The Jed Foundation (2015), people of a variety of ages, races, religions, and incomes can find themselves troubled with a mental illness. Some groups have been found to be more at-risk than others, but anyone can be affected by a
mental illness. The Jed Foundation (2015) also states that mental illnesses can affect people at various stages in their lives, but often appear between the young ages of 18 and 24. This is the typical age of most college students, and these mental illnesses can affect the students before or during their college experience. Many young adults in college are struggling with mental illness for various reasons, with some groups being more prone to mental illness than others. Despite the sheer number of college students experiencing mental illness, treatment rates are significantly low. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the idea of mental illness among college students and discover what makes this group unique in relation to mental health. The main points of this paper discuss why college students are an at-risk population for mental illness, which groups within the college student population have an increased risk of developing mental illness, and the treatment rate for mental illness among college students.

**College Students: A Population at Risk**

Through research, it has become apparent over the last several years that college students are a population at risk for mental illness. A reason for this is that young adulthood has been found to be the age of onset for many mental illnesses. This finding affects young adults of all ages, including those who do not attend college. Another reason college students are at risk for developing mental illness is because there are many stressors in their environment that lead to the start of mental illness. These young adults find it especially difficult to balance and fulfill all of the roles in their lives. A final factor that puts college students at risk is the diverse types of mental illnesses they experience. Although college students can find themselves suffering from any of the various mental illnesses, some mental illnesses tend to be more prominent in the population than others.

**Young Adulthood: The Age of Onset**

As students find themselves graduating from high school, they may soon have to experience the challenges that a mental illness can bring into the life of young adults. Blanco et al. (2008) interpreted the results of face-to-face interviews from the 2001-2002 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, a survey that analyzed alcohol addiction and other mental disorders. They found that one-half of young adults ages 19-25, both attending college and not attending college, met the criteria for at least one of the mental disorders listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Fourth Edition* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

The incidence of mental illness has been found to increase during young adulthood (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006). This is possible because young adults face a variety of challenges that they may have not experienced earlier in their lives, which could put them at risk for mental illnesses. For example, many
people transitioning into adulthood experience substantial personal, contextual, and social role changes, often at the same time (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006). In fact, many young adults find it difficult to adjust their identities to the various changes that are occurring in their lives. According to Kadison (2004), new experiences and emerging relationships can leave young adults confused about their current identities. Young adulthood can induce an identity crisis, as well as several other crises that can come about with this age group.

**Stressors for College Students**

In addition to the general stressors that go along with the transition from adolescence to adulthood, college students face their own unique set of challenges. The pressure to succeed academically is very high for college students. Many students find themselves striving for perfect grades or working too hard to keep average grades, which causes students to feel overwhelmed instead of challenged (Kadison, 2004). Kadison (2004) also stated that extracurricular activities, parental expectations, and racial and cultural pressures play a large role in academic success, as well as academic stress. Financial worries are also a great burden for young adults attending college. Maintaining a job while going to school, taking out loans, and being uncertain about the economy and job market are all factors that add stress for college students (Kadison, 2004).

It is quite easy for these stressors to add up and take a toll on college students. By surveying 374 students, Beiter et al. (2015) found that when students are concerned about certain aspects of their lives, their level of concern is positively correlated with depression, anxiety, and stress levels. In the study, there were 19 total sources of concern evaluated, including academic performance, pressure to succeed, post-graduation plans, and financial concerns. Even when accounted for individually rather than combining the concerns, all 19 sources of concern identified in the study had a significant positive correlation with depression, anxiety, and stress (Beiter et al., 2015).

**Types of Mental Illness Common Among College Students**

There are a wide variety of mental illnesses with which college students can be diagnosed. However, it seems that there are a handful of disorders that run rampant within the college population. Eisenberg, Hunt, and Speer (2013) interpreted survey data from the 2007 and 2009 Healthy Minds Study, which is a survey with the purpose of analyzing the mental health of college students. They found that 32% of college students had either depression, anxiety, serious thoughts of suicide, committed an act of non-suicidal self-injury, or a combination of these mental health problems. Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) reported that one-third of undergraduate students reported that their depression made it difficult to function, and one-tenth reported serious thoughts of suicide within the past year. Substance abuse, such as alcohol or drug abuse, can be quite common in the
college population due to changes in freedoms and responsibilities when transitioning to adulthood (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006). Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, have an onset age of 18 and are prevalent on college campuses due to high stress (Kadison, 2004).

**Groups at Risk Within the College Population**

Certain groups are more at risk for developing mental illnesses than others. Demographics such as gender, race and ethnicity, class, and living situation are associated with mental illness. In other studies, there are certain behaviors and situations that can contribute to the risk of developing a mental illness. Finally, it is also possible that certain characteristics of colleges and universities may contribute to mental illness among their students. All of these factors are important to consider when observing the relationship between mental health and college students.

**Demographics Associated with Mental Illness**

Gender has been found to be associated with mental illness, but the views on whether males and females are more at risk are conflicting. Using data from the Healthy Minds studies that were conducted at 26 different universities, Eisenberg et al. (2013) found that women had a higher prevalence for mental illnesses. In a similar finding from a survey of 1,700 undergraduate students at a large southeastern university in the United States, Mahmoud, Staten, Hall, and Lennie (2012) discovered that female students are more anxious and stressed. Despite these findings that state women may be more at risk, Blanco et al. (2008) argued that the higher risk belongs to men. Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) found that both genders have risk factors associated with them, stating that women are more likely to have depression and anxiety disorders, while men have a higher risk of suicide. With these studies in mind, it is safe to say that both genders are at risk for mental illness, with each gender being more susceptible to different types of disorders.

The risk of mental illness also varies between races and ethnicities but the views on this also seem conflicting. Eisenberg et al. (2013) noted that compared to white students, minorities suffered higher rates of depression. It was also found that the minorities in this study, except for African American students, were more likely to report that their mental health status caused an impairment in functioning. These findings could be due to the prejudice and discrimination that many races and ethnicities still face, even on campus. On the other hand, Blanco et al. (2008) discovered that being African American, Asian, or Hispanic actually decreased the chances of having a mental disorder. Like gender, race and ethnicity have risk factors that should be kept in mind. There are several other variables among the college population that contribute to the risk of mental illness. Upperclassmen, transfer students, and
students living off-campus were all found to have higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress (Beiter et al., 2015). Financial struggles and lower incomes also play an important role in whether or not students are at risk (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Blanco et al., 2008). Adding to the theory that academics are related to the mental health of students, two studies found that a low grade point average is significantly correlated with stress, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Mahmoud et al., 2012; Lipson, Gaddis, Heinze, Beck, & Eisenberg, 2015). It is important to realize that many of these risk factors are combined with one another, causing a greater amount of emotional distress to students.

**Behaviors and Situations Associated with Mental Illness**

Many students have to deal with situations that affect their mental health. For example, Blanco et al. (2008) found that loss of social support, having lost a steady relationship, and other stressful life events can increase the risk of students developing a mental illness. Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) also noted that low social support, as well as relationship stressors, can set the stage for mental illnesses. Stressful situations can arise at any time for students attending college, and how students deal with stressful situations also affects their mental health. Personality traits that people have, such as perfectionism, can cause stress and may make individuals more prone to mental illnesses (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Kadison, 2004).

Mahmoud et al. (2012) found that students who had used maladaptive coping behaviors—such as self-blaming, giving up, denial, or substance abuse—reported higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. The amount of dissatisfaction with life that students had was also found to be associated with levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Mahmoud et al., 2012). The mental health and well-being of students does not solely depend on their way of thinking, but it can certainly contribute to their distress.

**Characteristics of Colleges and Universities Associated with Mental Illness**

Along with the many characteristics students bring to the table, colleges and universities also play a role in the mental health of their students. Eisenberg et al. (2013) found that the academic rank of a college can affect students, with the middle-ranked schools rating slightly higher levels of mental health issues compared to other schools. Lipson et al. (2015) analyzed the mental health of students at 72 colleges and universities to determine if the characteristics of different institutions played a role in the mental well-being of their students. They found that mental health problems were the highest and treatment utilization was the lowest at schools that were either large, public, nonresidential, or had low graduation rates. These findings suggest that mental health problems occur on campuses that provide impersonal college experiences, or have fewer resources for their students (Lipson et
al., 2015). If students cannot access the care that they need, or feel uncomfortable accessing it, it is easy to see why mental health issues arise. **Treatment Rates for Mental Illness Among College Students**

Despite the fact that there are many college students suffering from mental illnesses, the treatment rate among them is low. There are several reasons why college students do not receive help for mental illness, such as perceived need for treatment, time commitment for treatment, and stigma. Other times, colleges and universities are simply lacking in areas such as education, prevention, and treatment for mental illness. Finally, it is important to note that if mental illnesses are left untreated, consequences for students can arise, ranging from academic performance issues to suicide. Treatment is vital in helping students with mental illness, and several mental illnesses can be helped with treatment. **Reasons College Students Are Not Receiving Treatment**

Many college students are affected by mental illnesses but are not receiving the treatment that they need. The percentage of students with mental illnesses not receiving treatment has been found to be as high as 60 or even 80 percent (Lipson et al., 2015). These large numbers of students not receiving treatment are caused by a variety of factors, including factors within the students themselves. Eisenberg, Hunt, Speer, and Zivin (2011) analyzed the opinions students had about treatment and found that many students believed they could deal with their mental health problem on their own, thought they did not have enough time for treatment, or assumed the stress they were experiencing was normal. Other factors found to affect whether or not students received treatment were perceived effectiveness of treatment and privacy or financial concerns (Eisenberg et al., 2011; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

Many students simply believe that they do not require treatment or think that their need for treatment is not significant. Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust, and Golberstein (2009) analyzed results of the 2007 and 2009 Healthy Minds Study and found that perceived need in the 2007 survey was a significant predictor of whether or not students received treatment in 2009. Perceived need can be influenced by a variety of factors, including stigma. In a survey of undergraduate students, Eisenberg, Downs, Golberstein, and Zivin (2009) found that the perceived stigma of receiving treatment was likely to create a personal stigma within students, making them less likely to seek treatment. It appears that attitudes toward mental health and treatment are improving (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010), but stigma is still present and a difficult obstacle to overcome. **Reasons Colleges and Universities Are Lacking in Treatment**

Despite the importance of mental health, many colleges and universities lack resources in important areas that deal with education, prevention, and treatment of mental illnesses. One reason for this is that the funding for
mental health services does not match the high demand for these services. A national survey of college counseling center directors in 2008 found 95% of directors reported an increase of severe psychological problems within their student body (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2011). Kadison (2004) noted that if a college has a counseling center, there may not be enough staff, making it difficult for students to access care when there are waiting lists and busy professionals. Kadison (2004) also argued that rather than focusing solely on crisis management, a smarter investment would include funding prevention and education programs to deter the number of crisis situations. If funding for mental health services is improved, it will be easier for students to access care and get the help that they need.

**Consequences of Mental Illness Left Untreated**

When students and colleges do not invest in mental health, the consequences can be detrimental for students and the college community. Mental illnesses can cause trouble academically for students. Heiligenstein, Guenther, Hsu, and Herman (1996) analyzed the surveys of 63 students with depression, dysthymia, or adjustment disorder and found that 92 percent of them had some form of academic impairment. In this study, the risk of academic impairment increased when the disorder was considered moderate to severe. Affective impairment, such as experiencing distress or disinterest, was found to be even more prevalent than academic impairment (Heiligenstein et al., 1996). Without treatment, the mental illness can last longer, and students have a greater chance of relapsing (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Suicide is seen as the greatest risk of untreated mental illnesses. The Jed Foundation (2015) states that among college students, suicide is the second leading cause of death. The elimination of mental illness is not possible, but nearly all of these consequences and risks are diminished with proper mental health treatment.

**Conclusion**

For many, transitioning to young adulthood is a joyful experience, but causes many others distress. It is quite clear that young adults, especially college students, are a unique group when it comes to mental health and illness. College students are susceptible to mental illness because young adulthood is a common age of onset, stressors in their environments contribute to mental illness, and certain types of mental illness are common within the college student population. Various demographics of students, behaviors of students, situations, and characteristics of colleges students attend bring about additional risk factors to students. The treatment rate of mental illness among college students is low due to internal attitudes, beliefs within the student, and external factors such as unavailable or inaccessible treatment. Untreated students can result in consequences for students and college communities. Students and parents need to educate themselves about mental health and learn about the
mental health services available at college. Colleges and universities should be aware of the risks of mental illness and make changes, such as funding additional mental health services and programs, so the mental health of their students can improve. Mental illness cannot be eliminated, but taking steps to ensure education, prevention, and treatment can help reduce the risk within this vulnerable population.


References


Oscar Wilde once said, “I have put all my genius into life. I’ve only put my talents into my works” (Ellis 192), which is a statement that’s not entirely true because it’s too vague and rudimentary to be an accurate description of his literary accomplishments. Talent consists of a person’s capability and Wilde indisputably had a great capability to write remarkable literature, but what exactly did he create with it? What did he address? Well, Oscar Wilde, in every sense of the word, was a critic and a “protest against current ugliness and smugness, a fine frenzy set against average goals and commonplace platitudes” (Ellis 191). He was renowned for his satire where he unapologetically share his struggles with English morality during the late nineteenth century and make an absolute mockery out of Victorian society. A popular work that exemplifies this is Wilde’s Edwardian comedy The Importance of Being Earnest which is a play that was explored as a class during our time learning about Victorian poets, but unfortunately it was the only piece by Wilde that we examined. Although it is one of his most famous works, there is another that is even more famous and probably the most celebrated, and that’s The Picture of Dorian Gray. It is the only novel that Wilde ever wrote, and it was both his greatest creation and his definitive ruin. It was the epitome of everything that is Wildean – from the style and content to the handling of social issues, and it is a work that unquestionably needs to be read by all who wish to gain a full understanding of just who Oscar Wilde was and what he brought to the literary table.

In Wilde’s preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray, he states: “All art is quite useless,” which is the main principle of the Aesthetic Movement in Victorian England during the Industrial Revolution (Wilde 4). Aestheticism is the notion that true art should take “no part in molding the social or moral identities of society” but instead it “should be beautiful and pleasure its observer [and] to imply further-reaching influence would be a mistake” (Duggan 62). During the time that The Picture of Dorian Gray was published, aestheticism was flourishing and so was Wilde’s involvement in the movement. The ideals influenced him so significantly that aestheticism became the epicenter of his book. It was the leading concept that made every theme and every conflict connected and possible. Not only is this the key reason why one should read The Picture of Dorian Gray, but it also opens one’s eyes to the characteristics of fin-de-siècle English society and how the
movement was “a mixture of straightforward rebellion against Victorianism, new theorizing, and extravagant posing” (Matsuoka 78). Essentially, to understand aesthetic ideals, to understand this pursuit of beauty, is to understand Wilde and his world completely and there is no greater instance of aestheticism than in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Now, it must be made clear that Wilde was not a textbook aesthete. Although he advocated the pursuit of beauty and happiness in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, he also recognized that aestheticism “needs to be properly controlled” for there are consequences when acting on such self-serving drives (Duggan 67). Through this view of aestheticism, many themes come to light and the first of them is the power of influence. Dorian Gray and Basil Hallward are two characters who are unquestionably the most easily manipulated by aesthetics. Basil’s character is the first to introduce the audience to such manipulation within the first chapter when he is explaining to Lord Henry what Dorian Gray’s beauty and boyhood innocence means to him, which appears to be quite an obsession. Hallward compares the face of Dorian Gray to that of Antonius and proclaims to Lord Henry that he sees everything – all of his art – in this youthful lad. This is where Basil’s idolatry of Dorian becomes quite problematic. Basil adores everything about a boyish, charming and virtuous Dorian, but because it’s such a fixed and temporary image of him, it’s a drawback and unintentionally sets Basil up for imminent disaster. People are not young forever. People are not pure forever. Ultimately, Dorian’s morality will deteriorate to sin – and it does. The power Dorian’s beauty has over Basil inspires the painter to create a portrait that both their demises, causing Dorian to be vain and curse himself to a life of depravity, which leads to not only destroying Basil emotionally, but also to Dorian murdering Basil many years later.

Dorian Gray does not reciprocate Basil’s worship. Indeed, Basil is a good friend, but he does not stimulate Dorian’s interests as Dorian stimulates his. Instead, Dorian’s attention goes to Lord Henry Watton, the man whose influence draws forth every hideous action the boy commits and every hideous thought that he speaks. Lord Henry and Dorian’s relationship is fundamentally opposite to Basil and Dorian’s relationship. While Basil adores Dorian’s aesthetic image, Dorian adores Lord Henry’s aesthetic philosophy because, as Lord Henry himself words it, “I represent to you all the sins you have never had the courage to commit” (Wilde 86). Throughout the book, Lord Henry seems to treat Dorian as some sort of personal experiment. It’s as if he took one look at this attractive youth and asked himself, “What would happen if I exposed this unsullied child to the desire of seeking out the pleasures he has always resisted?” Certainly, Lord Henry, as well as the audience, succeeds in finding this answer. Dorian becomes “the aesthetic lifestyle in actions, pursuing personal gratification with
abandon”; however, “while he enjoys these indulgences, his behavior ultimately kills [himself] and others” (Duggan). The death of Sibyl Vane is a sound example of this. When Dorian begins to chase after Sibyl’s heart, it is purely because of what she is physically and what she is artistically. His pursuit of aestheticism warps his personality to such an extent that he has no interest in getting to know her personally for he is only enchanted by her acting talent. As Lord Henry tells Dorian during their first meeting, “beauty is a form of genius – is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation” (Wilde 26). When Sibyl does not perform to her usually high standards, Dorian is completely repelled by her. It does not matter if she is entirely devoted to him. Without her art, she is nothing to him: “I loved you because you were marvelous, because you had genius and intellect, because you realized the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadow of art. You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid. My God! How mad I was to love you!” (Wilde 94-5). The following day when Dorian is given the news of Sibyl’s suicide, he laments that he had killed Sibyl Vane, a promising sign of self-awareness, but Lord Henry’s presence and never-ending control over Dorian quickly shatters that hope and Dorian, rather unbecomingly, compares his lover’s suicide to the “terrible beauty of a Greek tragedy” (Wilde 108). Of course, Sibyl Vane is not the only soul to be ruined by Dorian’s aesthetic lifestyle. Alan Campbell commits suicide as well after he aids Dorian in disposing of Basil’s body, Adrian Singleton frequents opium dens after forming a relationship with Dorian, and, as stated before, Basil devastates his career and his mind because of Dorian’s formidable influence. Through Dorian’s corruption at the hands of Lord Henry and Basil’s portrait, Oscar Wilde (although an advocate for aestheticism) cautions people by portraying “the dangers of the aesthetic philosophy when not practiced with prudence” (Duggan 62).

A second theme that Oscar Wilde focuses on through aestheticism is the hypocrisy of the ruling class in late nineteenth century England. Those who are familiar with Wilde’s works are no strangers to his disapproval of Victorian values. In The Picture of Dorian Gray, he uses aestheticism to expose Victorian high society as a false and materialistic environment – an environment Dorian’s existence can thrive in because what debaucheries one indulges in doesn’t matter much when one is as beautiful as Dorian. Beauty is not only the heart of Wilde’s book, it is the spirit that gives the Victorian lifestyle its vivacity. It’s all about the splendor. Who throws the most lavish parties? Who invites the best company? Who knows the best artist? As Dorian evolves into his aesthetic self, he experiences the freedom of abandoning his morality because to an aesthete “there is no distinction between moral and immoral acts, only between those that increase or decrease one’s happiness” (Duggan 61-2). The company Dorian keeps seems to feel the same since they are aware of his
immoralities, but never publicly ostracize him. They only whisper about the things he has done. Basil verifies this during his and Dorian’s last meeting before he is murdered:

I think it’s right you should know the most dreadful things are being said against you in London... your name came up in conversation... Staveley curled his lip and said you may have the most artistic tastes, but that you were a man whom no pure-minded girl should be allowed to know, and whom no chaste woman should sit in the same room with (Wilde 160).

It is rather duplicitous that even though all this awful gossip surrounds Dorian, he still remains a part of London’s social scene because of his innocent and handsome face. As Lady Narborough notes, there seems to be very little distinction between ethics and appearance in this Victorian world: “you are made of good – you look so good” (Wilde 192). This plainly shows how Victorians ignored the ugliness of an individual’s soul if this said individual peaked their aesthetic interests.

Dorian Gray is also a prime example of how Victorians used aestheticism as a form of escapism – to mask what is unpleasant with things that are handsome. Wilde presents this observation through Lord Henry’s cynical judgments about the motivation behind human kindness: “The reason why we like to think so well of others is because we all afraid for ourselves. The basis of optimism is sheer terror” (Wilde 81). Positivity cannot be without negativity. Beauty cannot be without ugliness. However, Victorians don’t wish to focus on these latter ideas because beautiful things are privileges for the rich. What they are oblivious to is this kind of attitude makes life a heartless joy. For instance, Dorian collects jewels, fineries and artworks over a course of many years, falling to “the worst form of escapism” by “surrounding himself with nothing but beauty” (Matsuoka 88). He uses these treasures as a means of avoidance, replacing harsh realities with beautiful delusions, and when on his way to the opium dens outside London, he is brought down to the unsightliness of his life:

Ugliness had once been hateful to him because it made things real, became dear to him now for that very reason. Ugliness was one reality. The coarse brawl, the loathsome den, the crude violence of disordered life, the very vileness of thief and outcast, were more vivid, in their intense actuality of impression, than all the gracious shapes of art, the dreamy shadows of song. They were what he needed to be forgotten (Wilde 199).

This reality is not just Dorian Gray’s, but it is the reality of most English Victorians that is portrayed to the audience throughout the book. It is the reason why Adrian Singleton spends his time smoking opium with sailors, why Sibyl Vane committed suicide, why Lord Henry Wotton continues to fuel Dorian’s devotion to him: because they lost their
magnificence and it was too much for them to bear. Oscar Wilde very much supports humanity’s pursuit of all things beautiful, but he does not support humanity using aestheticism to bury their heads in gold and not seeing the world around them. The excerpt above is another occurrence of Wilde openly criticizing the aestheticism to those who “worship beauty for their own sake” and use it as a “romantic escapism into fantasy” in order to disregard the ugly realities hidden inside both aesthetic and Victorian society (Matsuoka 89).

The homoerotic bonds between men in The Picture of Dorian Gray plays a large role in the structure of the novel, but it is also vital when studying Oscar Wilde’s private and public life. Wilde is frequently recognized in literature as the tragic homosexual poet who was imprisoned after being found guilty for “gross indecency” with his male lover, Lord Alfred Douglas. At this time in the late nineteenth century, sodomy and other homosexual behavior was punishable by law. It is known that during the trial, the defense team used The Picture of Dorian Gray as evidence against Wilde by reading multiple passages from the book that could be interpreted as erogenous. Considering The Picture of Dorian Gray is deemed one of the most homoerotic pieces of literature in the English language, it’s safe to say that the evidence against him was probably very damning. Now Wilde utilized the concept of male camaraderie to disguise the heavy homosexual undertones in his book, but the concept also fits well into Wilde’s larger aesthetic principles, bringing him to antiquity, where the admiration of youth and beauty was not merely culturally fundamental, but it was also celebrated as a physical relationship between males. To Wilde, the acceptance of homosexuality was a sign of refined culture and the extension of the mind. Artists and philosophers like Plato, Michelangelo, and Shakespeare had been known to have male lovers and, according to Wilde’s thinking, to possess such a cultured attraction puts one in the tradition of the greatest intellectuals to ever grace the planet. Wilde used this aesthetic approach in order to justify his lifestyle in conservative Victorian society and showcases it significantly in his novel through the cycling relationship between Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton, and Dorian Gray.

Basil Hallward is Wilde’s most prevalent character when it comes to expressing homosexual themes. As stated previously, Basil has an overwhelming adoration for Dorian Gray in the beginning of the book. He thinks that Gray is aesthetically pleasing in every way, which inspires him to paint the boy’s portrait and it turns out to be the best piece he’s ever created. Although Basil regards Dorian so highly in the first chapter to the point where is seems that Basil is talking about a lover, one can’t say that it’s utterly homosexual because it’s masked as conversation about art. To the audience it just appears as a man appreciating the handsomeness of another man from an aesthetic perspective. It’s not until later in the book that it’s more deeply hinted,
if not loudly broadcasted, that Basil favors Dorian as more than a muse during the scene where Basil explains that the reason why he didn’t exhibit Dorian’s portrait was because he feared it would expose too much of his idolatry for him:

I was dominated, soul, brain, and power by you. You became to me the visible incarnation of that unseen ideal whose memory haunts us artist like an exquisite dream. I worshipped you. I grew jealous of everyone to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself. I was only happy when I was with you. When you were away from me you were still present in my art... (Wilde 123).

This is the turning point where Basil’s aesthetic appreciation for Dorian is confirmed to have transformed into romantic feelings quite some time ago. Sadly, Basil never enjoys the fulfillment of his desire for Dorian because Dorian is too consumed with Lord Henry. However, Basil’s feelings remain the same up until the moments preceding his death years after his confession.

During Basil’s last run-in with Dorian (who, at this point, is pretty far gone in his self-gratifying aesthetic lifestyle) Basil confronts Dorian on all the horrible chatter that is traveling around London about him. When Dorian claims that all of it is middle class nonsense, Basil becomes distressed, crying out, “You have not been fine. One has the right to judge of a man by the effect he has over his friends. Yours seem to lose all sense of honour, of goodness, of purity. You have filled them with a madness for pleasure” (Wilde 161).

Here, Basil admits to himself that “the object of his idolatry in no longer pure” and therefore the aesthetic value he has for Dorian is gone, which stifles his sexuality, but most importantly, with the destruction of Dorian’s purity, Basil’s art is gone as well, making his murder at the hands of Dorian – his one true artwork – beautifully tragic (Alley 6).

Similarly to Basil, when Lord Henry first encounters Dorian Gray he is captivated by his youthful appearance and overcome with the desire to use him and frame him into this ideal personality. Since Lord Henry “trumpets the aesthetic philosophy” with sophistication and bravado, he effortlessly persuades Dorian to “trust in the principles he espouses” (Duggan 61). The homoerotic attachment Lord Henry has to Dorian is very different than the attachments Basil had. Lord Henry has no inclination to be tender or actively attempt to preserve Dorian’s good nature because he is everything that is negative about the Aesthetic Movement. He doesn’t see reality. He only sees what will escalate his happiness and what escalates his happiness is his total influence over Dorian. It could be speculated that his influence over Dorian is Lord Henry actually seducing the boy and that he gets some sexual enjoyment out of it that heightens his self-satisfaction. Nevertheless, what is known for sure is that Lord Henry and Dorian are fascinated with each other and completely inseparable, but not romantically involved with each other in...
the “lovingly” sense of the word. They can’t love one another if they’re constantly seeking their own pleasure.

Lastly on the topic of homosexuality, there are ideas that suggest that Dorian Gray was not only a subject to male advancements, but he was pursuing men as well in a very Lord Henry-like fashion. Dorian apparently had relationships with numerous young men in London, but it was a matter that was never talked about until Basil brought it up in his and Dorian’s last conversation together. So, it would lead one to believe that whatever occurred during the times these relationships were active could be something shameful. Basil intensifies these suspicions by telling the audience more of what he knows:

There was that wretched boy in Guard who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England, with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Ashton Singleton and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent’s only son, and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James Street. He seemed broken in shame and sorrow. What about the youth Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him? (Wilde 160–1)

It is highly implied that Dorian led these men down a path of corruption – the same corruption that he was introduced to by Lord Henry – and it begs the question: did Dorian have a homoerotic interest in them like Lord Henry seemed to have with him? It’s an inquiry that really doesn’t have an answer since these incidences were kept in secrecy and died with Basil’s character, but knowing Dorian Gray’s morality towards the end of the novel, how deep he was into the destructive side of aestheticism, it’s not a far-fetched assumption.

In brief summary, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a definitely novel that comes once every century. It was a work that really shook up Victorian society because it went against everything England believed in, uncovered the faults of the ruling class and their lifestyle, and presented male sexuality in an entirely new light. Oscar Wilde exhibits that he is a genius at his craft by giving his work this irresistible darkness that makes you feel as though you’re being manipulated along with the characters. He wrote about social issues in a way that no one else knew could duplicate because Wilde was a one of a kind artist. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is without a doubt a must-read work if someone wants to experience Wilde in his best and most scandalous form.
Works Cited


Looking at Indian culture through the perspective of the book, *Thirty-Two Tales from the Throne of Vikramaditya*, we see traditions that can be reflected in many areas of life. For the most part, readers only see the life of a king and the brahmins that he comes into contact with. However, the themes in the book reach beyond a single social position or trade. The Hindu culture reflects a belief system that reaches a much broader scope, so that the same behavior that is admired in a king might also be seen in the way others conduct their daily business. If they are in line with Hindu beliefs, then they are working towards the same goal no matter what their trade.

In the documentary film, *Ayurveda: The Art of Being*, we see another side of Indian culture, one that has lasted through the centuries. The film follows the Ayurvedic practices of several Indian gurus and scholars as they put to use knowledge that has been around since probably before 3,000 BC. Some say that the word Ayurveda means “the science of life” (“About the Ayurvedic Institute”), and others explain it to mean “the wisdom of life” or the “knowledge of longevity” (“Introduction to Ayurveda”). While these translations describe it well enough, they do not quite capture the full idea. Ayurveda is fascinating because it does not attempt to separate the physical illness from the patient’s mental state. It combines science and philosophy in a way that makes more sense than modern medicine would want to admit. One of the main advantages to learning about it through this documentary is that it interviews real people in India who seem to truly understand the practices. It is not just a “practice” to them; it is a way of life. As it says in the title of the film, Ayurveda is “the art of being” (Nalin).

One important aspect of this culture is the idea that everything is made up of one whole. Everyone is a part of a single consciousness, or unity. This is significant in relation to the book because it explains why Vikramaditya displayed such self-sacrificing behavior. One place where this is clearly acknowledged rather than just being acted out is when it is stated, “for the large hearted, the world itself is one family” (Dvātrimśikā 49). If you are part of the same unity that your neighbor is part of, then helping them is the same as helping yourself (“Hindu Ethics”). This is also the mindset that some of the Gurus in the film have. One man says that health for a specific person, health for an animal, health for society, and health for the entire planet “is not something different.” Everything is part
of the “natural rhythm.” The individual is the whole. The whole is the individual.

A reoccurring theme in *Thirty-Two Tales* is the importance of acquiring knowledge. This is also relevant in the documentary, since a healer obviously has to learn quite a bit about his trade before he can heal anyone. There are several similarities between the book and the film in the methods and the nature of learning. In a few of the stories the king leaves his kingdom in the hands of his ministers so that he can be free to roam throughout the country in disguise. To us, it might seem strange that Vikram feels that he has to travel in order to learn new things, especially since he is king and probably has many resources available to him, but it is more understandable considering their culture. Some of it has to do with the fact that these tales take place during a time period when things had to be done differently, but that is not the only reason.

When reading, you come across many sayings and maxims that fill up almost half of the book. These are often preceded by the words “It is said” and followed by “and similarly.” In these cases, characters in the story are repeating cultural teachings that have probably been ingrained in them from a young age. At first it might seem like the author incorporated these pieces of philosophy for the sake of literary flourish, but the film shows us differently. From time to time the gurus will recite something to the interviewer. When this happens it is so natural that it just blends in to the rest of their speech. This is how they learn and retain much of what they know. One man explains that “there are lessons in the form of poetry,” and he even goes so far as to say that trying to learn in a different way is not proper and could be considered “stealing” (Nalin).

The film makes it clear that, though people can try to learn through reading, they cannot truly understand unless they have been instructed, in person, by a guru. Many of the concepts, especially in medicine, are too difficult to grasp without a lengthy apprenticeship ("About the Ayurvedic Institute"). The basic idea that can be drawn from this is that it is experience, not books, that makes someone knowledgeable. That is why Vikram feels the need to travel. If he hears about something happening far away, he goes there himself to verify if it is true. The reason that he gives for wanting to do this is that he wants to “see various kinds of marvels, to gain knowledge of the differences between good and wicked people, and to understand oneself” (Dvāatriṃśikā 85). This is a much deeper sort of knowledge than the word usually implies. As one of the experienced gurus in the documentary confidently states, “He who knows his true self and nature is the greatest person of all” (Nalin). The word “great” here is used previously to refer to important figures. It implies accomplishment, the kind that cannot be learned from a book.

The application of knowledge also goes much deeper than in some other cultures because it is inextricably
connected to the philosophy of unity that was discussed above. We see over and over again in the book that Vikramaditya uses what he knows to help people at every opportunity, in the same way the gurus in the documentary exhibit a humble and generous attitude towards their patients. Most importantly, it is emphasized that nothing should be done for personal gain. The book tells of the transience of wealth as opposed to the lasting reward of doing good things. It compares the nature of wealth to “a lamp’s flame flickering in a gusty wind.” (Dvātrimśīkā 52) The gurus in the film go even further by showing an obvious contempt for money. One of them asks, “Why should I go and do anything for the sake of money?” Another one explains that he had been taught that, if wealth comes from the suffering of others, it is contaminated. (Nalin) These people have a very peaceful attitude toward life. They are not concerned with elevating their own position, and they use what they do have to help others, just like the legend of Vikramaditya.

At one point in the film there is an old man speaking of how he has embraced the end, whenever fate decides to take him. Others around him try to assure him that he could reasonably live ten more years, but he protests that possibility by saying, “Enough is enough” (Nalin). This idea of living a full life and being okay with the fact that it is coming to a close is also seen in the book. It says that people only fear death because they have not done what they are supposed to do, and that if they did, they would “await the arrival of death like that of a friend” (Dvātrimśīkā 87). This view tells a lot about the nature of this culture. Knowledge is not acquired for the sake of knowledge, and wealth is not acquired for the sake of wealth. Everything is supposed to be done for the good of all. Those who can truthfully say that they have lived this out are the ones who seem to be most content with life. You could say that they have mastered the “art of being.”

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Compassion Fatigue

By Carly Flint

Write a paper incorporating current nursing journal articles pertaining to a professional nursing issue. This assignment was completed for Professor Janet Reed's Professional Nursing Development.

Abstract

Compassion fatigue has the ability to negatively affect patient care during hospitalization, which can be detrimental to the nurse-patient relationship. Compassion fatigue is a major concept that needs to be evaluated based on a clear definition to enhance understanding. Compassion fatigue is displayed through a multitude of signs and symptoms evidenced in the attitudes of professional nurses. However, compassion fatigue is also closely tied and connected with burnout although major difference exist. Additionally, many nurses decide to leave the nursing profession due to feelings of compassion fatigue and burnout (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Research conducted by Potter et al. (2010) suggests that advanced education may increase the risk of compassion fatigue and burnout. Most importantly, methods to combat and eliminate compassion fatigue should be directly incorporated into the nursing profession. This paper aims to describe compassion fatigue and potential causes, distinguish the difference between compassion fatigue and burnout, and evaluate ways to alleviate compassion fatigue throughout the nursing field.

Keywords: nurse-patient relationship, compassion fatigue, burnout, education

Compassion Fatigue

During a patient’s hospitalization process many healthcare professionals are completely unaware that the patient is observing and noting every action of the nurse, doctor, and team members. Many nurses in the profession can recall working with other professionals who despised being on the job, and made it known to everyone that this was the case. However, patients are also noticing this negative demeanor, which may be a direct representation of compassion fatigue. The concept of compassion fatigue can be described as the decline in one’s empathetic ability to care for those who are suffering (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Another concept to consider in the nursing realm is what Maslach describes as nursing burnout which encompasses the overwhelming stress that accompanies daily life and particularly in the work environment (Potter et al., 2010). The question that arises is can a nurse escape the trap of compassion fatigue during their career, and what are some evident indicators that a nurse may be experiencing compassion fatigue? This paper aims to
describe compassion fatigue and potential causes, distinguish the difference between compassion fatigue and burnout, and evaluate ways to alleviate compassion fatigue throughout the nursing field.

Walker and Avant (2005) give a comprehensive definition by stating, “Compassion fatigue is the physical, emotional, and spiritual result of chronic self-sacrifice and/or prolonged exposure to difficult situations that renders a person unable to love, nurture, care for, or empathize with another’s suffering” (Harris & Griffin, 2015, p. 82). Compassion has been proposed as an integral part of nursing and essential virtue by the nursing icon, Florence Nightingale (Ledoux, 2015). Considering that many nurses in the profession are noted for their caring ability, compassion fatigue can create a huge disconnect between how nurses are perceived. Furthermore, compassion fatigue can be recognized through the unique display of evident physical and emotional characteristics. Nurses may exhibit signs of fatigue, irritability, lack of joy, and develop physical illnesses when overwhelmed with compassion fatigue (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Some physical ailments that may occur include development of headaches and gastrointestinal upset (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Sinclair and Hamill (2007) note that compassion fatigue may also present through a decreased attention span, forgetfulness, isolation, and the experimentation into compulsive behaviors such as substance abuse, overeating, and overspending (Ledoux, 2015). Ultimately, these signs and symptoms can create a danger in the health care milieu when nurses are exhausted with compassion fatigue. Some direct issues that have occurred due to compassion fatigue include: medical errors, decreased quality of patient care, decreased patient satisfaction, and the nurse also has decreased job satisfaction (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Nurses experiencing compassion fatigue can also have a vast majority of emotional feelings that may be displayed outwardly, or kept within. Some emotional qualities of compassion fatigue include: anxiety, fear, anger, vulnerability, emptiness, sadness, uncertainty, and thoughts of despair (Ledoux, 2015). Conclusively, all of these emotional components nurses may be experiencing with compassion fatigue can put the individual at an increased risk for, not only threat to their physical well-being, but infliction to mental health as well.

With all of these potentially harmful physical and emotional components of compassion fatigue, it is important to be conscientious and observant to the potential causes of compassion fatigue in the nursing health care profession. Figley (1995) states that compassion fatigue can be elicited due to prolonged exposure to trauma and difficult patient situations, particularly those containing high acuity patients (Hunsaker, Chen, Maughan, & Heaston, 2015). A major risk factor to the development of compassion fatigue is involvement in traumatic situations, and dealing with multiple bad outcomes,
particularly being exposed to patient death. Likewise, a recent study displayed results that nurses working in inpatient settings had higher levels of compassion fatigue when compared to those working in outpatient settings (Potter et al., 2010). This finding can again be related to the exposure of increased high stress situations, and unfavorable outcomes which are less likely to occur when patients are not hospitalized for extended periods such as an outpatient setting. Some other contributing factors to the development of compassion fatigue include working longer shifts and a decreased managerial support (Hunsanker et al., 2015). These environmental factors of working long hours without supportive team members and supervisors can cause the nurse to begin despising coming to work; this can thus be the initiative spark to the cycle of compassion fatigue. Another interesting research finding, displayed results that younger nurses experience more compassion fatigue due to the increase stress felt being immersed into the nursing practice (Potter et al., 2010). This finding is quite alarming, and requires a need to discuss compassion fatigue during the nursing education curriculum to alert new graduates to the possibility of this existing health care problem.

Moreover, within the nursing profession the topic of compassion fatigue has been closely tied, or used synonymously with nursing burnout. However, there are important distinctions between both of these notions that should clearly be differentiated to enhance understanding. Burnout is more revolved around the environmental stressors that exist within the health care setting, whereas compassion fatigue develops from emotional stress with patient care that results in decreased empathy (Potter et al., 2010). Some of the environmental stressors leading to burnout include high acuity care environments, overcrowding, and negative problems with administration (Hunsaker et al., 2015). Another notable difference between compassion fatigue and burnout includes the length of onset. Burnout is more likely to develop gradually overtime, while on the other hand compassion fatigue usually develops very suddenly (Hunsaker et al., 2015).

An interesting study conducted using the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL R-IV) scale displayed data that supported educational differences between the experience of compassion fatigue and burnout in Oncology nurses (Potter et al., 2010). The findings showed that nurses with bachelor’s degrees displayed more at risk scores for compassion fatigue, and those with advanced degrees such as a master’s were more at risk for burnout (Potter et al., 2010). It may be possible that additional schooling and advanced degrees for nurses make them more advantageous in high acuity areas when searching for an occupation which can increase the risk of compassion fatigue. Advanced education may also give nurses with supplemental degrees more unrealistic expectations about the work
environment and job satisfaction (Potter et al., 2010). It is also important that when examining these findings, the study only evaluated nurses within the field of oncology, which can be notably tasked with patient deaths. A similar study evaluating compassion fatigue in critical care nurses noted that compassion satisfaction was lower within bachelor degree nurses than those with associate or master’s degrees (Sacco, Ciurzynski, Harvey, & Ingersoll, 2015). Obviously, differences within results exist due to the variety of specialties being evaluated, however this requires additional research in the facets of many nursing specialties comparing education levels and compassion scores.

Burnout and compassion fatigue can be a potential reason nurses decide to leave the healthcare field, and is evident when examining increasing turnover rates (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Although many differences exist, compassion fatigue and burnout have similar consequences noted by Burston, Stichler, and Potter et al. that both negatively affect patient safety and satisfaction along with the nurse retention rate (as cited in Hunsaker et al., 2015).

With the evident infiltration and dispersion of compassion fatigue amongst nurses and other healthcare professionals, there acquires a need to discover and implement ways to prevent and alleviate compassion fatigue. Personal ways the nurse can combat compassion fatigue includes taking part in personal journaling, counseling, maintaining a healthy nutritional status, and getting involved in support groups (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Nurses can directly take action to prevent compassion fatigue by creating moments to connect with patients that can directly increase job satisfaction (Reimer, 2013). Reimer (2013) found that Oncology nurses who brought an optimistic attitude to the work environment had positive outcomes in patient interaction, improved patient satisfaction, and staff well-being. The nurse can also put emphasis on making the moments throughout the day matter by providing exceptional care to patients, taking on a motivational stance of optimism and energy (Reimer, 2013).

Nursing managers also play a vital role in combating compassion fatigue by acknowledging and discussing compassion fatigue, recognizing workers’ contributions, rotating the care of critically ill clients, providing education about compassion fatigue, offering quiet rooms for staff, developing a buddy system coupling novice and experienced nurses, and implementing a work timeout when needed (Harris & Griffin, 2015). Managers thus have a large role in not only identifying compassion fatigue, but implementing creative ways to aid staff members in preventing compassion fatigue. Some institutions have created special forums to help combat compassion fatigue, due to the severity that the issue is having within healthcare today. One of these forums began implementation in the United Kingdom and made its way to the United States, and hopefully will be
trialed in other international healthcare settings. This forum is known as Schwartz rounds, they are a discussion based forum used to allow staff members to explore emotional aspects of patient care in an environment that is confidential (Thompson, 2013). This methodology seems very advantageous and offers a form of debriefing that may be needed due to emotionally taxing patient care.

Many healthcare professionals would agree that at one point or another they have witnessed compassion fatigue first hand during their career. However, the growing concern is that this empathetic exhaustion phenomenon is continuing to expand and infiltrate many nurses, particularly in high acuity specialties such as oncology and critical care. It is important to recognize that patients can sense when a nurse is experiencing compassion fatigue through the symptoms that are expressed by health care professionals. This ultimately hinders the fidelity of the nurse-patient relationship. There needs to be a push for awareness about compassion fatigue including education on warning signs of compassion fatigue, as well as differentiating this notion from nursing burnout. More importantly, implementation of strategies to combat compassion fatigue need to be an imminent concern for healthcare institutions today.

References


The allure of time travel is that it allows for discovery and adventure in a place that was thought forever lost. Shows like Doctor Who depict such ideas, with the Doctor and his companion(s) going on fantastic adventures through space and time, interacting with the varying cultures along the way. There is, however, an aspect of time travel that doesn’t get much focus, although it plays an important role: the cost. While in some cases the travel is for mere pleasure, in others the reader sees the repercussions of such excursions. Through stories comparable to Stephen Baxter’s The Time Ships, Max Beerbohm’s “Enoch Soames: A Memory of the Eighteen-Nineties,” Ray Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder,” and L. Sprague de Camp’s “A Gun for a Dinosaur,” different types of costs are illustrated and time travel does not have a flat fee. Time travel can cost money, morals, life itself, or even the course of history, with each scenario forever changing the traveler.

The first cost of time travel is a monetary one. To be able to travel such a distance, the technology must first work. This is shown in de Camp’s “A Gun for a Dinosaur,” when the narrator says “The machine cost a cool thirty million. I understand this came from the Rockefeller Board and such people, but that accounted for the original cost only, not the cost of operation. And the thing uses fantastic amounts of power” (216), thereby putting a dollar amount on time travel itself. Although one would think that the ability to explore through space and time would be so fantastic that a price cannot be named for it, the narrator does so easily. This cost factors into time travel’s limitations, especially in regards to the class of people who would be able to afford it. Since the cost is so high, it makes sense that travelling through time to hunt dinosaurs would become unique to upper class society. The narrator addresses this directly, bringing up the fact that “…[the] guides catered to people with money, a species with which America seems well stocked” (216), clearly stating the general clientele. Due to this limited audience, is time travel truly being respected as it should be, or does it become more of a game? Through the characters treating the travel as a means for bragging rights and trophies, they are lowering both the value of the journey, and that of their money. This lowered value implies that the characters, such as Courtney James, blindly embark on the safari without a second thought about what else the trip might cost. If he is only concerned with
the financial burden that time travel poses, then he is not conscious of the possible dangers of such an endeavor. Although the loss of the money may not directly impact the character, the focus on the money implies that there is a feeling of invincibility if one has enough money.

Another story that exemplifies a physical cost is Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder,” where the fee is ten thousand dollars per person. The strict rules for this story’s time travelers have the potential to heighten this cost further, as an official states, “If you disobey instructions, there’s a stiff penalty of another ten thousand dollars, plus possible government action, on your return” (203). These costs, in conjunction with the previous discussion of the limited audience, reveal that time travel, though enviable to the reader, has become mundane to the society within the story. It has become another job that can make ends meet, although the journey is fantastic. Much as flight used to be unheard of and fantastic in nearly the same sense, it has just become another vehicle used to get to a desired location. The cost of time travel is high, but not high enough to gain respect for it. Although there are strict rules within this story, as opposed to de Camp’s, the focus is still mostly on the financial issue, although danger is directly addressed as a possible concern by the main character, Eckels. The financial cost brings time travel into a tangible realm, but it also leads the focus slightly away from issues of safety. Also, the idea that a monetary fee can cover any violations of rules during the journey again implies that invincibility. The realization that money can’t change the past sobers Eckels at the end of the story, and he has to face his fate.

The next cost of time travel is that of morals, which is best depicted through Beerbohm’s “Enoch Soames: A Memory of the Eighteen-Nineties.” Soames’ greatest wish is to see the impact of his literature on future generations, especially a hundred years into the future. In his hasty wishing, he says “... Or, better still, if I could be projected now, at this moment, into that future, into that reading-room, just for this one afternoon! I’d sell myself body and soul to the devil for that” (46). Though this may have been meant as jocular, he goes through with a deal. The trip does not have the outcome that he desires, but he is still stuck with the damnation that he chose. In this, he is similar to Doctor Faustus because he chooses damnation without putting much thought into the repercussions of such a deal. In both cases, the outcome is not what was expected, and yet they are both stuck with the choices they have made. Enoch’s greed and pride already give him a basis for judgement from the audience, but selling his soul for the opportunity to travel through time finishes his moral judgement. By the end of the story, he no longer has free will to live out the rest of his life as he pleases: he is immediately sentenced to his eternity in Hell. Instead of thinking about how much more he could foster his writing career, he blinds himself and jumps into an inescapable
situation. He disregards the life that he could have finished in order to fulfill his selfish desires, and ends the career that he seemed to love. While he is presented with the opportunity to give people something to remember, he instead makes it so that it is up to someone else to make people remember that he lived, therefore making him dependent upon another the fulfill his life goals.

In addition to these, time travel can cost life itself. Enoch Soames becomes damned for all eternity, and his life forfeit before he could finish it. The devil takes him away and he disappears for the rest of time. His disappearance signifies his departure into Hell, and therefore the death of his human life. Not only did Soames sacrifice his moral character, but also the rest of the life that could have been spent writing. This begs the question: was it worth it? Yes, he was able to view the lack of impact that his writing would have on future generations, but he also gave up his opportunity to write and publish anything else. Since writing seems to be the thing that he cherishes the most in his life, it is strange that he would make such a bargain, knowing that he would not come out of the experience.

Although it should be common knowledge that making a bargain with the devil is never a good idea, I wonder if Soames thought about how quickly his sentence would begin. Had he been fully aware of how little time he would have left over, would he have made a different choice, or would his curiosity still have won out? After returning with the devil, Soames seems more timid that he originally was, showing a change in personality after his travel through time. His next change, of course, is that he disappears, never to be heard from again.

Another prime example of time travel’s deadly component is found within “A Gun for A Dinosaur.” Courtney James’ greed and pride become focal points when he decides to go back to the Cretaceous a second time. His vices also come to light through the fact that he can so easily lie about why he wants to go back in time. James’ excuse for wanting to go back to April twenty-third, specifically, is “I lost my wallet in the Cretaceous... I figure if I go back to the day before I arrived in that era on my last trip, I’ll watch myself when I arrived on that trip and follow myself around till I see myself lose the wallet” (234), which is false. Due to the humiliation that the Raja and the narrator, Reggie, made him feel at the end of the original voyage, James wants to kill them and prevent the affair. In this story, however, time is not malleable, but self-regulating. Since time is powerful in this representation, James’ journey causes him to be taken out of time and killed. He is incapable of interfering with timelines as he pleases, and therefore dies. De Camp clearly explains this phenomenon by stating that “... the instant James started to do anything that would make a visible change in the world of eighty-five million B.C., such as making a footprint in the earth, the space-time forces snapped him forward to the present to prevent a paradox. And the violence of
the passage practically tore him to bits” (235). James’ carelessness makes him no longer able to interact with time, and he is therefore permanently removed. Although the character was never shown to have a cognitive change, accepting the fact that he is not, in fact, invincible, his death shows that he is obviously not the same as he was prior to time travel.

A third death that resulted from time travel is that of Eckels after stepping on a butterfly in “A Sound of Thunder.” Through this simple action, time is altered enough to change the English language in addition to an important election. His small mistake degrades the intelligence of society at large, and the change is irreversible. Due to this, similar to Courtney James, he has to be taken out of time and so Travis, the Safari Guide, shoots him. This story represents time as being malleable, as opposed to de Camp’s self-correcting version, so mistakes made throughout time have huge impacts. While a butterfly sounds insignificant in relation to time as a whole, Travis’ explanation for the reason why the rules of time travel are strict makes perfect sense, and he brings up a good point. His reasoning is that “[w]e don’t want to change the Future. We don’t belong here in the Past... A Time Machine is finicky business. Not knowing it, we might kill an important animal, a small bird, a roach, a flower even, thus destroying an important link in a growing species” (205), which depicts a central idea about time travel: people belong in the time in which they were born, and time is not to be disturbed.

Whenever that someone tries to play God with time, there are consequences. Courtney James is killed through the impact of returning him to his own time, and Eckels causes everyone to suffer the backlash of his mistake. In the case of Eckels, however, he has the worst punishment even prior to his actual death. This is due to the fact that he has to remember what the world was like before, and that he is the cause of the drastic changes. Travis killing Eckels is actually a merciful move because he may very well have been driven crazy by the guilt of knowing what he has caused. Through staying and accepting the fact that he must be taken out of time for what he has caused shows that Eckels has grown brave throughout the course of the trip. He went into the trip worried about his own well-being, but by the end of the journey he accepts that paying a fee cannot reverse the changes he has caused.

Furthermore, history itself is exchanged for time travel, such as in the case of Baxter’s The Time Ships. The Time Traveller’s first adventure (as seen through H. G. Wells’ The Time Machine) broke history. Although on that premier voyage through time he was able to meet Weena and become accustomed to that particular society, his travels also altered the course of history. As he looks to return to Weena, the Time Traveller again comes in contact with Morlocks (similar to that initial journey). Through altering the course of history, the Morlocks that he encounters on this trip have advanced, no longer acting as the brutes the Traveller originally
witnessed. The issue here is that the Traveller himself has not changed and expects the Morlocks to engage in the same behavior as before, therefore prompting him to act as a savage. His attack of Morlocks as they approach him shows that he is the one moving throughout various versions of history. Nebogipfel, the main Morlock in the story, as well as the Time Traveller’s companion on his journeys throughout the novel, explains that the Morlocks that the Traveller attacked were “[c]hildren. They were children... the Earth is become a... nursery, a place for the children to roam. They were curious about [the] machine. That is all. They would not have done [the Traveller], or it, any harm. Yet [he] attacked them, with great savagery” (62). Not only is the Traveller losing his civilized nature here, but the difference of this timeline is visible. The Morlocks that he is used to seeing as vicious and evil are now curious and innocent. In addition, Weena does not exist in this version of the future, thereby raising the possibility that the Traveller has killed the culture that he loves in his haste to explore time. Because of this possibility, he is guilty for destroying the woman that he has come to adore.

Sometime after finding that the timeline has changed dramatically, Nebogipfel brings in the idea of multiple histories. The Traveller has not necessarily killed time, but he has changed its course. Instead of having one single progression from past to future that is fixed, the entire concept of time is shifted. Nebogipfel explains that

“You must think of these versions of History as parallel corridors, stretching ahead of you... The corridors exist independently of each other: looking ahead from any point, a man looking along one corridor will see a complete and self-consistent History — he can have no knowledge of another corridor, and nor can the corridors influence each other” (135), so history has been split into different compartments, as opposed to being a single, steady flow. This impacts the Traveller’s ability to see Weena again, the Traveller himself, and Nebogipfel’s ability to return home. Since these multiple histories have been created, the Traveller is never guaranteed the ability to meet Weena again, nor is he able to know which history he has become a part of. This also allows him to meet his younger self without causing a paradox, which results in him witnessing his own death. He is also responsible for the loss of Nebogipfel’s home because it was lost through time. The Traveller in this story becomes a savage in comparison to the Morlock that is presented, and he is also guilty of breaking history. Although he is still a curious soul, he learns to be careful with how he acts on his curious impulses. He can no longer safely travel through time, and he becomes responsible with his actions.

In each of these stories, time travel costs more than the adventurer would originally think. While the characters in de Camp and Bradbury’s stories are fully prepared for the monetary cost of the travel, they are not prepared for what else they must sacrifice for their
experiences. In each story, a character dies because of his interference with time, therefore heightening the cost. Beerbohm’s character Enoch was not fully prepared to lose all morality in exchange for seeing the impact that he would never make on society, though he still had to follow through with his bargain with the devil. Finally, Wells and Baxter’s Time Traveller was not prepared for the fact that, in order to explore time, he would have to shatter it into countless pieces. What all of these stories have in common is that the greatest cost of all was the person that the traveler was prior to the journey. None of these characters remained the same from the beginning of the story until the end of it, and none of them can ever go back. The innocence, or any remnant of ignorance of time, was lost through the journey and they are each forever changed because of their travels.

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Sliding, Stopping, and Dragging: “Lavender Linguistics” and the “Gay Voice” as Reflected in RuPaul’s Drag Race

By Zachary A. Piette.

Conduct empirical research on an aspect of linguistics prevalent in everyday life. Then, take the research and write a 4-5 page paper discussing the reason for it, methods, results, and future implications. This assignment was completed for Dr. Jennifer M. Cunningham’s Linguistics.

Introduction

In the media today, we are seeing a distinct and noticeable shift in the representation of LGBTQ characters (particularly gay men) in television and film. Where in the past we almost exclusively saw characters such as Jodie Dallas in Soap (played by Billy Crystal), representing a particularly “fay” and effeminate characterization of a gay man; or perhaps more notably, Jack (as played by Sean Hayes) in Will & Grace, who proudly and flamboyantly flaunts his sexuality; today we are instead beginning to see a heteronormative representation of gay men in mainstream media, which can be seen both as a positive (the implication being that not all gay men fall into the category of “feminine” in regards to gender-coding) and a negative (suggesting that there is a “more realistic,” gay man, thereby unfairly and generally cannibalizing a representation within the community itself).

Representation in general can be considered a positive, especially in regards to the critical acclaim and general popularity of series such as Modern Family, wherein we see two of the main characters – Cam and Mitch (as played by Eric Stonestreet and Jesse Tyler Ferguson, respectively) – who present a gay couple in a relatively positive way (there are still some tropes and stereotypes at play, but that is the subject of future papers). Perhaps less notably, but with great praise in the LGBTQ community, we see Hank (Kevin Daniels) in the FX series Sirens, who stands as openly gay, but is gender-coded masculine – a rare occurrence in and of itself.

However, while instances such as these can have mixed implications for the LGBTQ community, it poses an interesting scenario as a result. Where we saw in the past a clear and almost atypical representation of femininity in gay men (characters that “sounded” gay), today we are seeing something of a straight-washing in the media’s representation – suggesting that an entire identity is being forced to the background in order to make room for a “more realistic” depiction – unfairly creating a “better than” mentality within the community itself. This dichotomy between the two is where we see an important (although admittedly loaded) linguistic question being posed in the same vein as Richard Thorpe’s 2010 film Do I Sound Gay? and that is: what does the gay voice sound like?
While this question is relatively nebulous due to the connotations that the query suggests, it is not the first time that the notion has been considered by linguists. The concept of “lavender linguistics” (the concept of LGBTQ linguistic characteristics as advanced by William Leap) has recognized that while not indicative of sexual orientation in and of themselves, there are several distinct characteristics at play that often lead a listener to draw this conclusion (while still being groundless and highly presumptuous in the same right). These perceived characteristics of gay speech most notably include: vowel extension/shortening, vowel shift, pitch shift, S-Fronting, sibilance, and lexical; and exist as the (relatively stereotypical) attributes one might associate with overtly-feminized “gay speech.”

With this factor in mind, I chose to observe a relatively mainstream – and furthermore actual (as opposed to caricature) – representation of feminized gay men in order to see which attributes are perhaps the most prevalent in gay speech. Due to the relatively limited selection of mainstream representations of this archetype, RuPaul’s Drag Race stood out as a clear focus in order to observe these characteristics at play both in an honest and plentiful manner – both in the interest of simplification and economy of work.

That being said, I think it should be noted that correlation does not equal causation, especially in regards to one’s sexuality. The purpose of this research is not to prove that there is in fact a “gay voice,” but is instead meant to observe the characteristics associated with what people happen to consider as “sounding gay,” and ultimately see which of these characteristics is the most prevalent and potentially theorize as to why that is. This is not meant to persuade or convince or create a field guide to determining one’s place on the spectrum. Instead this piece is meant to see what characteristics are at play and perhaps even quell some of the notions that unfairly label speech as a representation of sexuality.

Methodology

For the purpose of this research, I chose to observe RuPaul’s Drag Race, because first and foremost, it falls under the category of reality television, whereas sitcom characters are undoubtedly a product of writing and intent, and are thereby unreliable representations for just this reason. Furthermore, the participants in the program itself are typically gender-coded feminine – thus lending itself to observation, as instances of observable characteristics would (hopefully) be more prevalent. Using the notions of “lavender linguistics” and pulling from previous research done on the concepts of gay vocalization and the characteristics therein by such linguists as Erez Levon, Don Kulik, Robert Podesva, and Emma Teitel, I observed the introductory segments (participant introduction segment only) from five episodes of RuPaul’s Drag Race (from the five most recent seasons to date,) noting instances of the aforementioned distinguishable characteristics: vowel
extension/shortening (i.e. bye as /baɪ/), vowel shift (Californian accent/tonality), pitch shift (vocal fry/falsetto,) s-fronting (/s/→/θ/), sibilance, and lexical (e.g., fish, gagging, eleganza, etc.). From here I was able to determine which instances are the most prevalent and typical of “gay speech,” and thus, could most closely be associated with the premises of feminine gender coding and identification as it relates to sexual orientation.

Research and Analysis

Taking note of the above characteristics, I was able to gather the following data through my observation of these segments. First and foremost, I wanted to provide an individual breakdown of each episode in regards to the characteristics as follows:

Season 3 Characteristic Breakdown

Season 4 Characteristic Breakdown

Season 5 Characteristic Breakdown

Season 6 Characteristic Breakdown

Season 7 Characteristic Breakdown
With these statistics in mind it is fairly easy to see that certain characteristics are more prevalent than others – pitch shift for instance, routinely showed up in the observed segments, allowing the resting total count for said characteristics to be almost triple that of the second and third most frequently observed characteristics (lexical and sibilance). Alternately, some characteristics rarely showed up during observation – specifically, s-fronting and vowel-shift, (resting counts at four and sixteen instances respectively over the course of all observed segments) barely register as an attribute due to the significantly rare instances of usage.

While some characteristics remained relatively consistent throughout each observed segment, while others rarely observed, others still (when observed through a chronological perspective) revealed a relatively distinct and unique curve regarding usage: As you can see, lexical characteristics reached something of a peak at season five, but have been maintaining a steady decline since. It would be interesting to see if instances continue to diminish over time, as it would suggest that lexical markers are becoming less and less frequent – begging the question of whether or not this aspect of “gay speech” is a reliable indicator, or more or less based off of trends within the community itself.

Another curious aspect I noticed while observing these segments is that s-fronting occurred more often than not when spoken by participants from Puerto Rico and rarely otherwise. While relatively surprising in the context of this research, it was not that surprising dialetically, as in Spanish-speaking countries (such as Spain) where the seseo is present, the “s” phoneme /s/ is often pronounced /θ/. To illustrate this aspect, consider the pronunciation of the Barcelona: whereas in English it is typically pronounced /barsələnə/, a native speaker on the other hand may
ronounce it as /ˈbɑːrəlɔnə/ fronting the “s” sound as such. With this aspect in mind, this particular characteristic becomes significantly less reliable as an association to “gay speech,” but rather as an indicator of nationality instead.

The other characteristics observed (vowel lengthening and vowel shift) provided relatively inconsistent results overall. While in some observed segments there was a relatively significant amount of observed instances for each characteristic, others still presented few, if any. With vowel shift for instance, the frequency seemed largely dependent on the dialect (hence being referred to as the Californian shift) of the speaker himself (an aspect that can be interpreted similarly to s-fronting). Comparatively, vowel extension/shortening seemed to occur intermittently as well – however, considering the scenario of the segments themselves (first introductions/meetings) the frequency of the incidents themselves could be interpreted as something of a false representation – being that even in “straight speech” people have a tendency to lengthen vowels in introductions as a means to convey positivity or excitement. Thus, this particular linguistic characteristic could be perceived as more mannerism than linguistic component.

**Discussion**

While this research was never intended to give a definitive answer to the original question (largely due to the relatively narrow scope that the research itself entailed) it did manage to provide some interesting insight into the attributes related to “lavender linguistics.” Generally speaking, the characteristics in and of themselves, while observable, are not necessarily traits that should be associated or linked to “gay speech,” primarily as they are not guaranteed to occur in the first place. Furthermore, because the original question is posed to find difference, as a result it can be seen as an attempt to marginalize an otherwise already relegated group.

All in all, while these characteristics may be indicative of gay speech on a larger scale, the relatively nominal results I gathered in my research make them relatively unreliable as indicators on the whole. Consequentially, I would go on to suggest that the bulk of these observed traits are not necessarily representative, but coincidental at best. Furthermore, given the relatively precarious associations that many of these characteristics bear in regards to their indication/prevalence in “gay speech,” this research did not effectively answer the originally posed question. Instead, it suggests an entirely different one as a result.

Whereas initially I hoped to see what characteristics could be the most closely associated with “gay speech” as a whole, I instead discovered that many of these traits (even when the observed subjects could potentially be seen as the most likely suspects to utilize them in the first place) are not adequate or reliable indicators in and of themselves. While certain features –especially pitch
shift – did seem to occur at a relatively high frequency in the observed segments comparatively speaking, one trait alone is not adequate representation (or even a logical correlation) to the implications of the original inquiry.

Instead, my results lead me to question whether or not the premise of “lavender linguistics” is fair in its attempt to relate what are, in essence, merely the qualities of linguistics as a whole to sexual preference using a biased parameter. By comparison, if one were to try and attribute linguistic aspects to “straight speech,” it seems like the end result would be one that unfairly presents it as “normal,” suggesting the opposite for “gay speech” (i.e. hegemony.) While it does present an interesting sociolinguistic experiment, it still can only be described as remarkably heteronormative and biased from the start, and at best only perpetuates anxiety about something that cannot be changed – and besides, the pitch of your voice holds no bearing in sexual orientation and is not adequate evidence even if the two should coincide. Ultimately, it appears that the original question has no real answer – so logically, it should bear only one snarky response as a result: and that is, “like a normal voice, only fabulous.”

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"We Were Rich Before" –
War, Class, and Privilege in Maus & Perspolis
By John C. Polles

Write an essay that compares and contrasts an element of two of the graphic novels read in class. This assignment was completed for Dr. Jayne Moneysmith’s Special Topics: Graphic Novels.

The “graphic novel” is often noted for being a medium that lends itself easily to the depiction of trauma. As scholar Hillary L. Chute observes, “The field of graphic narrative brings certain key constellations to the table: hybridity and autobiography, theorizing trauma in connection to the visual, textuality that takes the body seriously” (4). This unique combination of the visual image and the written word makes the trauma depicted more palpable to the reader, and these narratives, therefore, have the enormous potential to be much more visceral than, for example, the conventional novel. Many narratives, such as Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home, focus on the personal traumas of individuals, whereas others, such as Art Spiegelman’s Maus and Marjane Satrapi’s Persepolis, are positioned within trauma of entire communities. While these books both concern themselves on a structural level with individual people and their families, their settings during times of war allow them to take on a heightened significance. However, despite the fact – or perhaps because of it – that these narratives are concerned with individuals and communities in the midst of their respective wars and conflicts, the protagonists of both Maus and Persepolis live comfortably in the middle class, and this affords them significant privilege which, at least to some extent, often allows them to avoid many of the traumas of war.

Maus is a recounting of the experiences of Spiegelman’s father, Vladek, as a Jewish man in Poland in the years leading up to and during World War II. During these years, Vladek goes into hiding, is forced into the ghetto, and is eventually imprisoned in Auschwitz. However, although these experiences are unimaginable to contemporary Western readers, they could have been much worse. Early in the first volume of the narrative, it is made clear that Vladek and especially his wife Anja have a considerable
amount of capital. Soon after the two wed, Vladek’s father-in-law purchases Vladek a new textiles factory, saying, “You know, Vladek, when you and Anja give me a grandchild, I want him to be well-off” (Spiegelman 1: 21). Not only is this initial purchase massive, but soon after in the same volume, the uninsured factory is robbed, and Vladek’s father-in-law says, simply, “Well, at least I can help you build it up again” (1: 36).

The introduction of Marjane’s class and the associated privilege is more subtle, though that privilege itself might be more useful to her than Vladek’s is to him. For example, early in Persepolis, Marjane’s father, Ebi, is discussing with her the history of the current Iranian regime, injecting comparisons both with “Gandhi in India” and “Ataturk in Turkey” (Satrapi 19-21). This discussion shows that Marjane’s family has access to education, and this intellectual capital is directly connected to her family’s monetary capital. Soon after, Ebi reveals to Marjane that she is directly descended from the old emperor of Iran, who was her great-grandfather (22). Despite the fact that the family lost the bulk of its money previously, the residual class status that accompanied it seems to have been at least somewhat retained.

The class privilege of characters in both narratives is reinforced further by their access to certain services that might be viewed as luxuries. In Maus, Vladek is concerned by the amount of prescription drugs he finds in Anja’s closet (see fig. 1). It is later explained to him by a pharmacist friend that Anja has these drugs because she “was so skinny and nervous” (19). This is telling in that these pills were not prescribed to treat a medical illness, which would constitute its own level of privilege, but a psychological one, the treatment of

![Figure 1: Spiegelman, Maus I, p. 19.](image)
which connotes another level entirely. After Anja has her first baby, she is so overcome by her illness (“She’s always hysterical or depressed... A breakdown!”) that she has to move into a sanitarium (Spiegelman 1: 31-35).

Though no specific monetary value is assigned to this trip, it is difficult to imagine it not being significantly expensive.

While Anja and Vladek are away at the sanitarium, with the latter accompanying the former for support, a governess is hired to care for the infant Richieu in their absence (31). Later, the family is able to hire a maid in addition to the governess, which is indicative of their amassed wealth (37). In Persepolis, Marjane’s family also employs a maid, Mehri, (33), and one of the narrative’s most telling moments relates to her relationship with a man above her in class (fig. 2). This represents Marjane’s first exposure to struggles with class difference, although this particular struggle is not Marjane’s in particular. Her inability to understand her father’s unfair reaction to Mehri’s relationship can easily be read as a childlike naïveté, but it can also be interpreted as her own class privilege clouding her judgment. People in the lower classes have to be concerned about these things – Mehri, even though she was confident the relationship could last, still knew she had to lie and pretend she was Ebi’s daughter and not the family’s maid.

Figure 2: Satrapi, The Complete Persepolis, p. 37.
An obvious signifier of these characters’ privilege is their level of education. In *Maus I*, although Vladek received very little formal education, he is able to speak English, which he learned through private lessons (16), which, presumably, was not accessible to all in the community and provided him with a great deal of intellectual capital. Indeed, later in the narrative, this ability becomes very useful (fig. 3). The unique combination of Vladek’s ability to speak both English and Polish buys him a level of privilege within Auschwitz. For being able to help one of the Polish guards learn English, Vladek forms a connection with this guard, which allows him to access good food and good clothing that fits well (32-33). Vladek is even able to get a pair of shoes for a friend, Mandelbaum, whose feet are too big for the shoes that have been provided for him (29, 33-34). Later in that same volume, Vladek is able to quickly mend shoes for the guards, based on his experience “watching how they worked when [he] was with [his] cousin in Miloch, there in the ghetto shoe store” (60). For this, he gains “a warm and private room from where to sit” (61). This skill may be seen as more practical than intellectual; however, this skill requires training, and it certainly allowed Vladek to possess a certain amount of privilege compared to his peers while still a prisoner in Auschwitz.
To contrast, in *Persepolis*, Marjane’s educational privilege is a bit more conventional and apparent. While her schooling in Tehran was inconsistent, she grew up in an environment which provided her with a great deal of access to information. She grew up aware of complex academic theory, such as that by Marx and Descartes (12) and Lacan (181). She rejected some of these theories (181), but she was able to access them, and to understand her present position and that of others in Iran. The most obvious educational privilege – and the one most closely related to Marjane’s class status, is her ability to leave Iran altogether to study in Vienna (147). Having the means to leave the country, and avoid much of the war while still in the country, is perhaps the biggest privilege afforded to Marjane and her family. Though this is possibly the largest and most apparent privilege afforded to Marjane, there are still many more ways she avoids trauma.

While still in Iran, Marjane hears of a man who was tortured and killed by the revolution (Satrapi 51). Much has been made of this section of the narrative and, in particular, the first panel on the following page (fig. 4). Chute describes Satrapi’s choice to divide this man into “seven neat pieces” as being representative of “what Marji cannot yet realistically imagine” (151). Again, this is certainly evidence of her naïveté as a child, but it is also evidence that she was allowed to hold onto her childhood possibly much longer than many of her peers. In keeping with this, Marjane has her first experience with seeing death after a bombing in her neighborhood in which her friend dies. (Satrapi 142). This occurs a full forty pages after the scene in the narrative involving the “keys to paradise” (fig. 5). While these children are being blown up, Marjane and her friends are at a party (102). Satrapi’s choice to juxtapose those two images is telling: She is intentionally exposing her own privilege through Marjane. Chute argues that “the author draws a scene of death not as a child perceives it empirically, but as she imagines it in a culture pervaded by fear of violence and retribution” (147). Although this fear pervaded her culture,
the ability to simply “imagine” this violence is, again, its own sort of privilege. Marjane remained removed from the bloodshed that was occurring very close to home.

Similarly, in *Maus*, as the Holocaust and by extension World War II begin to become a reality as Vladek is drafted into the Polish Reserves Army, Anja, Richieu, and their governess have at least what they believe to be the opportunity to avoid the worst of the situation by moving to Sosnowiec (fig. 6). This move was not, in fact, any safer than staying in Bielsko, where they had been living previously (37), and it took a great deal of capital to be able to move three people there. Obviously, this move is not on the scale of that seen in *Persepolis*, as Marjane, while in Austria, was completely out of danger of the war with Iraq and the Islamic Revolution – such a move likely would have proven to be impossible given the continent-wide reach of World War II – but Vladek still has options. He and his family were able to assess what information they had and act accordingly. The question of whether or not that actually saved their lives is never – nor could ever be – answered, but it very well could have, although Richieu did die in one of the ghettos.
Because of the far-reaching effects of war in both narratives, and the relatively liberal mindsets of especially Marjane’s family, it is rare to see the protagonists intentionally exerting their privilege over other individuals. However, there is one scene in each narrative where we see main characters doing just this. In *Maus*, this scene comes when Anja is (accurately) suspected of hiding secret papers related to “Communist messages” (fig. 7). Vladek’s father-in-law paid the seamstress’s legal fees as well as a personal compensation—a total of “15,000 zlotys,” which was “a lot”—around the same time he paid for Vladek’s factory (1: 29). While her family still used their significant privilege to correct the problem Anja had caused the seamstress, this still clearly shows her exerting her privilege over the latter woman.

A similar event occurs in *Persepolis*, when Marjane fears getting caught in public wearing forbidden lipstick (fig. 8). In falsely accusing a man of sexually harassing her, she has doomed him to a fate which remains unclear (289). However, it does
seem likely that Marjane’s punishment would have only been a fine that she could have easily paid (as has been done multiple times before in other situations [288]). Despite the fact that she could have paid this fine, she chooses to instead play with the well-being – possibly life – of an innocent man.

A pivotal scene near the end of *Persepolis* involves Marjane discussing how their financial privilege had been an asset travelling abroad, and how that changed following the Islamic revolution (fig. 9). She also briefly discusses how their class privilege intersects with racism as well as xeno- and Islamophobia (203). This is a very telling passage, in that it shows that at least some of the privilege possessed by Marjane and her family has been lost during the war, or is at times overshadowed by their other identities, such as those along racial and ethnic lines. Similarly, in *Maus*, the reader sees Vladek in a very lower-class situation following his release from Auschwitz; he is being assisted by the American military, but while getting this aid, he needs to perform certain tasks (fig. 10). Following war, these individuals and families have found themselves subjugated in ways they never had before – Marjane’s mother never felt as though she were hated when she went abroad, and Vladek never had to do menial chores for bars of chocolate. The experiences of war directly caused this subjugation, and the passage in *Persepolis* suggests that it
entirely broke Marjane’s mother’s spirit. Anja’s suicide, as it is discussed in *Maus* (1: 100-04), is evidence that she, too, was broken by the war itself and the lowered class status that followed.

Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* aptly illustrate, not only how appropriate the graphic novel as a medium is to depicting large-scale trauma like war, but also how those with class-based privilege during war experience it. Throughout both narratives, the reader can easily see many of the differing ways in which this privilege can manifest itself. This culminates in the protagonists’ abilities to circumvent at least a portion of said trauma, showing the importance of economic privilege in war.

![Figure 10: Spiegelman, Maus II, p. 112.](image)

**Works Cited**


The Problem with Subsidence in Ohio
By Katherine C. Sherry

Make a pamphlet on an environmental issue affecting Ohio. This assignment was completed for Dr. Carrie Schweitzer’s How the Earth Works.

(Pamphlet appears on the following pages.)
What is Being Done

Fortunately the government of Ohio is aware of the issue and is making means to prevent more subsidence events. In 1985 they put the Ohio Mine Subsidence Insurance Law into effect which decrees that mine subsidence coverage is given in basic homeowner insurance policies, especially in the problematic regions (Ohio.gov). The Ohio Department of Natural resources is trying to fully map out where the abandoned underground mines are (Ohio.gov). They will have the knowledge of where potential problem areas will be.

Full Bibliography


The Problem with Subsidence in Ohio

By Katherine C. Sherry

What is Coal Mine Subsidence?

Coal Mine Subsidence is when the Earth’s surface drops because the ground underneath is filling the holes that were initially caused by mining (Ohio.gov). Subsidence can happen naturally, but coal mine subsidence is caused by humankind ("Subsidence"). This sudden collapse at the earth’s surface can lead to devastating effects; it damages homes and buildings, roads, underground facilities, and can be very dangerous for humans (Ohio.gov).

Mine Subsidence


How the Earth Works TR 9:15-10:45am

Unfortunately mine subsidence is a big problem in Ohio, specifically in Stark County, Jackson County, and Tuscarawas County (Crowell).
The Cost of Subsidence

The mine subsidence can lead to very dangerous problems, especially if it occurs on roads. A team from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) looked into the subsidence underneath Interstate 70 in 1995 (Hoffman 418).

They discovered that before construction, all of the surface runoff flowed into Mud Run (Hoffman 418). After, most of the runoff flowed into the channel next to the highway (Hoffman 418). The slope of that area is very gradual, changing the land into marshes (Hoffman 418). With further investigation, the ODOT detected the highway to be unstable and proceeded to close the lanes (Hoffman 421). The total cost to fix everything was $3,600,000 (Hoffman 421).

Ohio subsidence has caused $7.9 million in damage according to the US Office of Surface Mining (“Mine Subsidence Insurance”). The ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management estimates the cost to be even more, around $23 million (Crowell).

For homeowners, claims regarding subsidence can reach high numbers. In 1998 claim payments reached $134,000 (“Mine Subsidence Insurance”).

The cost of subsidence is expensive, but along with large amounts of money it comes with health costs as well.

Economic and Environmental Impact of Subsidence

There are environmental issues that arise from subsidence are caused by water. When the ground surface is broken, water is able to go into the underground mine from the broken surface (Chambers). Water from above, like precipitation or surface runoff, now flows into the open mine (Chambers).

The water in the mine leads to decomposition of the minerals in the mine (Chambers). Multiple metals are hazardous to aquatic life (Chambers). They are toxic and will dissolve sulfide minerals, such as mercury, which will contaminate the water (Chambers). The contaminated water will transport the toxins away from the mine which may lead to long term problems (Chambers). The water is now polluted and is unsafe for drinking and wildlife.

The people who live where there is land degradation caused by mining will experience poor air quality, noises and vibrations, as well as water pollution (Maiti). The water pollution will lead to vegetation loss (Maiti).

Mine subsidence affects the direction of water runoff and drainage (Hoffman 421). This can lead to drastic changes in the environment.

Mine subsidence can cause fractures in the ground (Pigati and Lopez 51). The fractures contain groundwater (Pigati and Lopez). Water drains into the sinkholes and will build up in the mine, eventually leading to a flood at the surface (Pigati and Lopez 51). These sudden floods alter the ecosystems of the environments.

Health Impacts

Since subsidence sinking is so sudden and unexpected, it can cause injuries to people. They are typically rare events, but they are more likely to happen if cities are built on loose sediments like clay, sand, or silt (Zeitoun and Wakshal 1).

Subsidence sinking rarely hurts anyone, however if it occurs on a roadway the chances of getting hurt increase (Ohio.gov). If it occurs while cars are driving over that road, the cars might crash into each other or fall into the ground depression.

A big health hazard that arises from subsidence sinking is polluted water (Chambers). The polluted water affects all wildlife, including vegetation, animals, and humans if that is their drinking supply (Maiti).

The filled entrances of mines can be dangerous as well. When closing the entrance to a mine, mine debris was poured into the opening without thought to the stability of the debris (“Subsidence Information for...”). The unconsolidated debris may fall deeper into the mine, which will lead to the shaft opening again (“Subsidence Information for...”). The shallow pockets might sink due to small vibrations such as feet walking along the top (“Subsidence Information for...”).

When these abrupt collapses occur, they are quite harmful and cause serious injuries (“Subsidence Information for...”).
Writing Center Review Submission Form

The Writing Center Review is an interdisciplinary journal containing select assignments written by Kent State Stark students. It is published each spring by the Writing Center staff as a way to showcase excellence in academic writing. We accept submission from all subjects and at all levels. We would love to read your writing!

Deadline: February each year (see campus monitors for the specific date)

Submission Guidelines:

1. The piece of writing must have been written for a Kent State Stark course during the Spring, Summer, or Fall semester of the previous calendar year.

2. A professor (either the professor who assigned the work or the professor who acts as your advisor) must nominate your work for consideration by signing this submission form.

3. We generally like to see papers between 750 and 4000 words (3-12 pages). We will consider shorter or longer works, but longer works (exceeding 4500 words) must be exceptional to merit inclusion. We must consider space limitations.

4. Any written assignment is welcome, regardless of subject or course level.

To submit, you will need the following:

1. A copy of your assignment sheet or paper rubric. If you do not have this, we need as much detail about the assignment provided on its own sheet of paper.

2. An electronic copy of your submission. This should not have your name on it. The title must appear on the first page. You may submit it via e-mail to writing_gst@kent.edu. Your name and title should be the only text in the body of the e-mail. Place “WCR Submission” in the subject line.

3. This form with the information on the back filled out completely. Submissions without completed forms will not be accepted.

After you have the assignment sheet/description and this completed form, place them into a large envelope. Do not forget to also e-mail your electronic copy. Address the envelope to the Writing Center, MH202. After that, you need only drop it off at the window on the fourth floor of Main Hall, OR at the Writing Center in Main Hall, Room 202.
Please fill out the following form completely. Do not forget your signature, it gives us permission to print your work upon acceptance. We will print the form as is, unless otherwise instructed. All information must be provided if your work is to be considered. Please print.

Name (as you would like us to print it):

__________________________________________________________

Street Address: ____________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________ Zip: ______

Phone Number: ____________________________________________

Email Address: ____________________________________________

Contributor Information (Please tell us a little about yourself. This will be printed on the "Contributors Page" of the WCR):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Submission Title: ____________________________________________

Detailed Description of the Assignment (You may use the assignment sheet of the rubric instead, both options need the professor’s name, the Course Number, and the class’ name):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Professor’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________

Student’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________

Note to the professor: This signature indicates that you support the student’s work and recommend it for publication in the Writing Center Review. Note to the student: This signature gives the Writing Center Review permission to publish your work in this journal, both in print and on our website.