

ENTRIES



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Entries

A Journal of Exploratory Research and Analysis

Perspectives dominate our everyday perceptions, directing our attention both *toward* and *away from* facets of reality which, when taken together, comprise the complex makeup of our surrounding world. Friedrich Nietzsche refers to this as our “wholeness in diversity,” by which he also means: “our spaciousness and multiplicity” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, §212). In the process of acquiring perspective in life, we cultivate attunements, attitudes and convictions. But do we always recognize how these orientations sensitize or desensitize us to the blind spots in our understanding? Are there not issues, concerns, opportunities and challenges relevant to our lives that we can only appreciate *from somewhere else*? As we grow older in life, we clearly discover points of entry to our surrounding world, but only by closing off or eclipsing *other* points of entry.

To see the world in a new light, to acquire new *entries* to the world, is to become responsive in a new way. The capacity to respond to issues and concerns otherwise masked from view demands a special openness and attention to what we find strange and challenging. We seldom see the world in a new light without first having the curiosity and willingness to explore unexpected or marginalized phenomena; nor without learning to discern otherwise hidden facets of our filtered social constructions.

The call to see the world in a new light -- to “open the universe a little more,” as Salman Rushdie has urged in *Imaginary Homelands* -- calls for critical voices, exploratory minds and the empowerment of creative forms of expression carefully interwoven with sensitive analysis and personal concern. It calls for attending to complexities in life that are all-too-often eclipsed from view by more dominant ways of thinking, feeling and speaking. Above all,

it calls for *an attentive ear*, the first condition for generating an attentive *response*.

The articles comprising this fourth annual journal solicit your ear and seek to direct your attention once again to the *margins of normalization*, to spaces of multiplicity where the questions reveal unthinkable *difference* in the midst of what is unthinkableably the *same*. Questions posed in this manner challenge us to think in the *margins of difference*. The goal is to expand our perspective by revealing silent facets of our surrounding world that are calling for our attention: *new points of entry to expand the scope of life that matters to us*.

Exploratory research and analysis is the key to opening the universe a little more. The contributions to follow offer opportunities for reflective thought and further lines of study regarding phenomena that speak to us from the margins of our personal, human, social, political and institutional involvements.

Our first cluster of papers explores entries to the poetic margins of human encounters with nature. A second cluster offers entries to questions of identity motivated by the standpoint of exile and nourished by the tempting desire to *belong* without *letting go*. A third cluster of papers explores entries to exploring some odd facets of disconnection percolating through contemporary society. The final cluster promises to relieve any stress you might acquire along the way, in exchange for entry to the absurd world of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*.

We trust you will enjoy these exploratory excursions into some uncanny regions of our experience. If they catch your ear and you are in the neighborhood on the afternoon of May 22nd, drop by the John Rogers Faculty Development Center and continue the explorations with us! There just might be more at stake in these questions and concerns than one is ordinarily inclined to recognize.

**HONORS PROGRAM
COMMUNITY STATEMENT**

The Honors Program at CSU Stanislaus is a community of scholars bound together by vital principles of academic openness, integrity, and respect. Through focused study and practice involving exploration and discovery across a variety of disciplines, the Honors Program upholds these principles of scholarly engagement and provides students with the necessary foundations for further research and inquiry.

Our interdisciplinary curriculum is integral to this work, and is intended to facilitate creative understanding of the irreducible complexities of contemporary life and knowledge. Personal and intellectual honesty and curiosity are essential to this process. So, too, is critical openness to difficult topics and respect for different perspectives, values and disciplines. The Honors Program aims to uphold these virtues in practice, in principle, and in community with one another.

Honors Program Advisory Committee

May 14, 2004

Acknowledgements

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Seniors in the Honors Program are encouraged to tackle complex problems using methods and knowledge from related disciplines. Honors Program faculty and research mentors offer critical feedback and guidance along the way. The main objective is for students to explore, gather and analyze information effectively, and to reflect on the implications of what they have discovered. Group discussions help to promote thoughtful questions. The goal is to communicate knowledge, judgments and original perspective derived from careful inquiry, exploration and analysis. Seniors will discuss the results of their research at the Senior Honors Conference on Tuesday, May 22, 2007 from 1:00-6:30pm, in the John Rogers Faculty Development Center. We hope you can join us!

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Snail Hunting with Dad

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2006

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, MY DAD AND I WOULD GO SNAIL HUNTING WHENEVER IT RAINED

WE'D COLLECT THE SNAILS ON A SMALL PIECE OF WOOD BEFORE RETURNING THEM TO THEIR HOME

LESS FORTUNATE SNAILS WERE KEPT IN JARS UNTIL THEY DIED

Philosophical Concepts of Nature and Wilderness in the Poetry of Gary Snyder

Joshua Kerr

Gary Snyder's poetry is accomplished by any measure. Since the 1950s he has published approximately twenty texts, won a number of awards (including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry), and stands as one of the foremost environmental poets of the past few decades. His poetry often deals with concepts of nature and wilderness and the relationship we, as human beings, have with the world of which we are a part. I approach Snyder's poetry with an eye toward the philosophical character and import of these issues and offer a conceptual reading of his poetry, focusing on selections from *Turtle Island*. Snyder grapples with difficult and delicate questions regarding our place in an environment that includes many creatures besides ourselves, and he does so with penetrating poetic sensibility. My intent is to show how Snyder's poetry can be read as a philosophical comment on these issues.

Snyder begins with an experience of alienation that he views as a noteworthy dimension of contemporary human life. Consider an early poem in *Turtle Island*:

So they bomb and they bomb
Day after day, across the planet
blinding sparrows
breaking the ear-drums of owls
splintering trunks of cherries
twining and looping
deer intestines
in the shaken, dusty, rocks.
All these Americans up in special cities
in the sky
Dumping poisons and explosives
Across Asia first,
And next North America,
A war against the earth.
When it's done there'll be
no place
A Coyote could hide. (22-23)

In this poem, "The Call of the Wild," Snyder describes a situation of alienation between the earth, trees, birds, and mammals and the Americans in "special cities in the sky" who, we are told earlier in the poem, "took to the air" and "never came down." This distinction is emphasized by spatial distance and images of enmity. How does Snyder characterize this alienation? He resists the somewhat commonplace dichotomy between the sphere of human life and that of 'non-human nature'. "The city is just as natural as the country, let's not forget it," he says. "There is nothing in the universe that's not natural by definition" (*Real* 91). For Snyder, the word 'nature' — "from Latin *natura*, 'birth, constitution, character, course of things'" — refers to "the material world or its collective objects and phenomena," and includes the "products of human action and intention"; 'nature' is "the physical universe and all its properties" (*Practice* 8-9). From this perspective, there can be no "human/nature" duality, because the former term is subsumed under the latter. "The whole," Snyder explains, "with its rivers and valleys, obviously includes farms, fields, villages, cities, and the (once comparatively small) dusty world of human affairs" (109).

Nevertheless, it is clear that "The Call of the Wild" articulates some sense of alienation, as do other poems in *Turtle Island*. The title of the poem offers one suggestion: alienation from the 'wild'. Indeed, Snyder speaks of a dichotomy between civilization and the wild. Wilderness, he says, has to do with "a diversity of living and nonliving beings flourishing according to their own sorts of order" (12). It has to do with a sort of order that is innate or internal to that which is ordered, rather than imposed externally; it has to do with resistance to "economic and political

domination by civilization”; it has to do with self-reliance, independence, and spontaneity (10-11). “So we can say,” Snyder says, “that New York City and Tokyo are 'natural' but not 'wild.' They do not deviate from the laws of nature, but they are habitats so exclusive in the matter of who and what they give shelter to, and so intolerant of other creatures, as to be truly odd” (12). So Snyder poses the question: “Where do we start to resolve the dichotomy of the civilized and the wild?” (*Practice* 16).

If the wild is not equivalent to nature, though, what *is* the wild? For Snyder, the distinction is important. Take the following passage from “Survival and Sacrament”:

It comes again to an understanding of the subtle but crucial difference of meaning between the terms *nature* and *wild*. Nature is the subject, they say, of science. Nature can be deeply probed, as in microbiology. The wild is not to be made subject or object in this manner; to be approached it must be admitted from within, as a quality intrinsic to who we are. Nature is ultimately in no way endangered; wilderness is. The wild is indestructible, but we might not *see* the wild. (194)

Snyder insists that the wild cannot be articulated in the same ways that nature can. Nature refers to the collective phenomena making up the material world; these phenomena can be, as he says, probed, analyzed, articulated in various ways, symbolically related to each other, and so forth. The wild, he contends, is not like this. “The word *wild* is like a gray fox trotting off through the forest, ducking behind bushes, going in and out of sight,” he says in “The Etiquette of Freedom” (9). Irene Klaver employs a similar figure: a deer appearing and vanishing at the edge of a tree line. “What constitutes the wild and the silent is this very play between appearance and disappearance, the slipping in and out of the limits of presence,” she says. “Untamed and not named, the wild and the silent escape the frames of our knowledge” (117). If the wild escapes the frames of our knowledge, then we must be

careful how we speak about the wild — if at all. “Perhaps one should not talk (or write) too much about the wild world,” Snyder continues. After all, “Nature description is a kind of writing that comes with civilization and its habits of collection and classification” (*Practice* 23). When the wild is taken up in these ways, it is lost; to extend the earlier trope, the fox does not admit being pinned down. One is here reminded of the common distinction we make between domesticated animals and those we consider wild. “As soon as they are defined into a special name,” Klaver says, “you have to be on your guard, because wild animals just appear, like the butterfly, the raccoon; or we follow their disappearing tracks, through snow, bushes, and deserts, over the mountains. They don't come when we call them as does Jacob, or Monday the cat. When we call wild animals by a name they disappear” (128).

Wildness does not admit of naming, nor of conceptualization or the domestication that comes with the entry into the nomenclatures and taxonomies of language. “[Understanding of the wild] is a tacit knowing that is always to be determined along the way, never caught in stable definitions but always moving. Something implicit,” she says; “as with the seasons, the being of the wild is change; it is a fluttering companion located between waking and dreaming; a colorful connection between knowing and not knowing; never caught in rigidity, it always moves, comes and goes” (124, 126). The wild can suffer the probings, conceptualizations, and identifications of neither nature nor civilization. When we make our approach from these standpoints, we do not see the wild. “As soon as one stakes out the wild,” Klaver says, “it is gone” (124).

If the wild is not accessible to us in the ways to which we are accustomed, if wildness is elusive this way, how are we to understand (and evaluate) Snyder's concept of the wild? Is the wild simply shut off from thought and inaccessible to human experience? No. For

Snyder, the wild is accessible to us in two primary ways.

First, the wild is accessible to us in ordinary *experiential* terms. Snyder often quotes Basho: “Go to the pine tree to learn of the pine tree.” His second point is that we can encounter the wild at the intersection between civilization and wildness. Snyder speaks of these places of intersection as 'frontiers'. “A frontier is a burning edge, a frazzle, a strange market zone between two utterly different worlds” (*Practice* 15). These frontiers between civilization and wildness are ubiquitous. “It has always been part of basic human experience to live in a culture of wilderness,” remarks Snyder. “There has been no wilderness without some kind of human presence for several hundred thousand years” (7).

William Cronon emphasizes a related point in “The Trouble with Wilderness,” where he points out how “everything we know about environmental history suggests that people have been manipulating the natural world on various scales for as long as we have a record of their passing” (83). In “The Rediscovery of Turtle Island,” Snyder makes a similar observation: “Hominids have obviously had some effect on the natural world, going back for half a million or more years”; he cites the deliberate use of fire as an example. “Almost any apparently untouched natural environment has in fact experienced some tiny degree of human impact” (*Place* 239-240). Likewise, however, any apparently civilized environment retains some degree of wildness. Consider the following lines from “Night Herons,” another early poem in Snyder’s *Turtle Island*:

Night herons nest in the cypress
by the San Francisco
stationary boilers
with the high smoke stack
at the edge of the waters. (35)

and:

the dog knows no laws and is strictly,

illegal. His neck arches and ears prick out
to catch mice in the tundra.

a black high school boy
drinking coffee at a fake green stand
tries to be friends with the dog,
and it works. (36)

In each case, the city of San Francisco is represented to the reader with an eye for the wild which is to be experienced within it. Wildness is not restricted to those areas designated as 'wilderness areas' or 'wildlife preserves'. “Shifting scales, it is everywhere: ineradicable populations of fungi, moss, mold, yeasts, and such that surround and inhabit us. Deer mice on the back porch, deer bounding across the freeway, pigeons in the park, spiders in the corners,” Snyder says. “Exquisite complex beings in their energy webs inhabiting the fertile corners of the urban world in accord with the rules of wild systems, the visible hardy stalks and stems of vacant lots and railroads, the persistent raccoon squads, bacteria in the loam and in our yogurt” (*Practice* 15). The termites in our walls, elusive as they may be (and troublesome, especially in relation to our civilization's distaste for small, crawling critters), are a wild presence in our lives.

Cronon reminds us of “the wildness in our own backyards, of the nature that is all around us if only we have eyes to see it” (86). Must we look for the wild to find it? As Snyder said, if we are not careful we might not see the wild. In the title of one of his books (*The Practice of the Wild*) he suggests wildness is something that can be *practiced*: we can cultivate an *openness* to it. Conversely, however, one of the determining aspects of many experiences of the wild is the way which these experiences impress themselves upon us. “The state of mind that today most defines wilderness is *wonder*,” Cronon says. “The striking power of the wild is that wonder in the face of it requires no act of will, but forces itself upon us” (88). Likewise, David Strong says wilderness “is not only a place you go. Wilderness is what happens to you.

Shivered, sweated . . .” (quoted in Klaver 124).

Our experience of the wildness of our own bodies often possesses this character. “Our bodies are wild,” Snyder remarks. “The involuntary snap of the head at a sudden noise or movement, the sudden sense of dizziness when looking over a cliff, and even the beating of the heart and passage of the breath betray the wildness of our mammalian bodies (*Practice* 17). The feeling of vertigo, the involuntary duck or jerk when something flits past our eye in a certain way, the experience we sometimes have when our heartbeat or breathing seems to swell up within us, ineradicable—all these experiences of wildness seem to grab us, whether we are looking for them or not.

These experiences, however, do not exhaust our possibilities for contact with the wild. For Snyder, “A person with a clear heart and open mind can experience the wilderness anywhere on earth. It is a quality of one's own consciousness. The planet is a wild place and always will be” (Gary Snyder, quoted in *New York Times*, “Week in Review,” Sept. 18, 1994, 6.). To encounter the wild anywhere requires a certain receptivity—eyes to see it, as Cronon says, or a clear heart and open mind, in the words of Snyder. “An acute sensitivity to sense-experience with its unremitting attention to the specificities of other bodies, be they human, animal, spatial, or elemental,” says Klaver, “is one mode of opening up the here and now of everyday life into more unpredictable, wilder, layers of experience” (123). If we cultivate or practice this sensitivity, we are able to see the wild in ways and places we formerly did not see:

Such a receptivity for sense-experience creates a familiarity with the intricacies of the other or the particularities of the places we inhabit—in the face of which any static conceptualization would be undermined—so as to make room for an awareness of a never-conclusive set of performative possibilities of the other, a richness of performative behavior

that manifests itself implicitly through complex patterns of adaptive and generative activities. (Klaver 124)

Wildness is all around us. “Wildness pervades us if we are open to it and participate in it. It is implicit in us and we in it,” Klaver says (124). In pregnancy, for example, our bodies — suddenly very mammalian — are gripped by the wild in an overwhelming way; our entrance into this world, despite often being framed by the carefully regulated context of the hospital, is fraught with wildness. Snyder speaks of mites in your seats and spiders under your chair; the air is filled with billions of germs (“Freewheeling” par. 33). The food we place in our mouths offers us a chance to encounter wildness. In agriculture, “the source of fertility ultimately is the 'wild',” he observes. “It has been said that 'good soil is good because of the wildness in it’” (*Practice* 97). The houses in which we live also speak to us of wildness. “The deep woods turn, turn, and turn again. The ancient forests of the West are still around us. All the houses of San Francisco, Eureka, Corvallis, Portland, Seattle, Longview, are built with those old bodies,” Snyder says. “We live out our daily lives in the shelter of ancient trees” (144). Take this poem, given at the end of a talk entitled “Coming into the Watershed,” in which Snyder portrays the confluence of wildness and civilization:

California is gold-tan grasses, silver-gray
tule fog,
olive-green redwood, blue-gray chaparral,
silver-hue serpentine hills.
Blinding white granite,
blue-black rock sea cliffs.
—Blue summer sky, chestnut brown slough
water,
steep purple city streets—hot cream towns.
Many colors of the land, many colors of the
skin. (*Place* 235)

From this perspective, it is not difficult to see how the wild may be present in places of civilization while there yet remains a dichotomy between the two. Civilization is not

opposed to wildness; on the contrary, civilization is permeated with wildness. However, civilization reifies the wild and blinds us to its presence. In an essay entitled “Blue Mountains Constantly Walking,” Snyder offers another picture of this alienation. “People from the high civilizations in particular have elaborate notions of separateness and difference and dozens of ways to declare themselves ‘out of nature,’” he says; he adds in parenthesis, “One could imagine the phylum Chordata declaring, ‘We are a qualitative leap in evolution representing something entirely transcendent entering what has hitherto been merely biology’” (114). This humorous aside gives us insight into the character of the civilized/wild dichotomy: it is self-created. “Our immediate business, and our quarrel, is with ourselves,” he says in “Survival and Sacrament.” “We are ignorant of our own nature and confused about what it means to be a human being” (189-190). Since before entering college, “the question of these contradictions of living in and supposedly being a member of a society that was destroying its own ground” had become important to Snyder (*Real* 94). These contradictions arise when civilization—and here we might think of language (particularly language which is given technical determination), the pressures of civilized life, certain cultural ideas and practices, etc.—teaches us to look for, see, and be tolerant only of certain forms and modes of life. In this sense, the need for receptivity is generalized to a communal or cultural level, and Snyder can say that the city is not wild in the sense that it is a place where the wild is not encountered.

Nevertheless, even civilized life can be a place of frontier, a “burning edge” at which we can gain access to the wild in an experiential way. For Cronon, wildness can be found “in the seemingly tame fields and woodlots of Massachusetts, in the cracks of a Manhattan sidewalk, even in the cells of our

own bodies” (89). For Klaver, “Wild is what travels through our skin, through our borders. Clouds roaming the sky, worms slowly inching through heavy earth, way under any property lines” (129). Even in civilized life, these points of contact are available to us. “Beyond all this studying and managing and calculating, there's another level to knowing nature,” Snyder says. “We can go about learning the names of things and doing inventories of trees, bushes, and flowers, but nature as it flits by is not usually seen in a clear light. Our actual experience of many birds and much wildlife is chancy and quick. Wildlife is often simply a call, a cough in the dark, a shadow in the shrubs. You can watch a cougar on a wildlife video for hours, but the real cougar shows herself but once or twice in a lifetime. One must be tuned to hints and nuances” (*Place* 262). This way of knowing the wild is not like knowing the laws of physics or the classification schemes of zoology. Rather, it reflects knowledge of the wild that is fleeting and elusive, but nevertheless impressive.

The second way the wild is accessible to us, according to Snyder, is in the linguistic form proper to its presentation: poetry. He has published more than a dozen volumes of poetry and half as many of prose. Among these, *Turtle Island* is in one respect an aberrational work, for in it poetry and prose appear juxtaposed alongside each other. For this reason, *Turtle Island* is a particularly fitting text with which to explore the relationships between poetry and prose, insofar as they regard the accessibility of the wild.

Snyder warns, as we saw above, that one should not talk and write *about* the wild too much, and that is reflected in much of his prose writing—he “talks around” and hints at wildness, while generally constraining himself to the specification of what wildness is *not*. Interestingly, he observes that most attempts at defining the word ‘wild’—for example,

those found in dictionaries—consist of pointing out (sometimes at great length) what 'wild' is not, but rarely offer a positive account of the wild (The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain”; we have seen the problematic character of that attempt at definition).

“The question,” according to Klaver, “is how do we preserve this kind of wildness, or, for that matter, retrieve otherness from its isolation within a merely symbolic status?” (123). For Snyder, poetry — while still a form of linguistic expression — is permitted a much more direct relationship with the wild than is prose. Most significantly, poetry offers the possibility of expressing the wild without trapping it in the domestication of the symbolic. For Snyder, the role of poetry is explicitly different from the role of prose. “Poetry is not a program,” he says, referring implicitly to his political prose, like that found at the end of *Turtle Island*. “That's basically a prose job” (“Freewheeling” par. 27). “The poet can make it on his own voice and mother tongue, while steering a course between crystal clouds of utterly incommunicable non-verbal states—and the gleaming daggers and glittering nets of language,” he says (*Earth* 118). Rather than speaking *about* the wild in the way prose does, poetry is able to 'do' wildness: poetry is able to inhabit and appropriate language so that the form of the expression is commensurate with the content of wildness. Thus Snyder can say, “I try to hold both history and wildness in my mind, that my poems may approach the true measure of things and stand against the unbalance and ignorance of our time” (quoted in *Ensign* par. 1). But how is this possible? What is it about poetry that grants it this potential that prose has not?

In part, the special potential of poetry has to do with its scope and endurance. “Of all the streams of civilization with roots in the

paleolithic, poetry is one of the few that can realistically claim an unchanged function and relevance which will outlast most of the activities that surround us today,” he says (118). He continues, “Poetry, it should not have to be said, is not writing or books. Non-literate cultures with their traditional training methods of hearing and reciting, carry thousands of poems —death, war, love, dream, work, and spirit-power songs — through time” (124). Poetry is able to render the wild linguistically accessible because, as a form of linguistic expression, it is itself (or can be) “wild” in some way.

Words and sentences have a materiality, whether in scratches on the page or vibrations in the air. At the same time, words are evoked by material. “Writing is always responding,” Klaver says. “Responding to words, scratches, thoughts, events, the rain, the trees. Taking up what is implicit. Implicit in texts, words, things, gestures, scents” (117). We must recognize here that language is not *simply* conceptual. It is also *affective*; it is also *biological*. More so than other forms of linguistic expression, poetry depends upon and has often insisted upon these non-conceptual elements of language — the timbre of the voice, its pitch and loudness; the rhythms of the body; the ebbing and surging of prosody; the affective power of metaphor. These elements, which poetry takes up explicitly, correspond to the affective and biological patterns of our lives, and thereby signify an opening of possibilities. Poetry has for this reason been associated with the expression of those aspects of life which are otherwise inexpressible, or expressible only in cumbersome, clumsy, and therefore largely inappropriate ways.

In the poem “Riprap,” Snyder takes up in poetic form the question of his poetry. Riprap, we are told, is “a cobble of stone laid on steep slick rock to make a trail for horses in the mountains” (*Nature* 4). He wants his poems to perform, in his words, “the work of seeing the

world without any prism of language, and bring that seeing into language” (quoted in Selby par. 31). The poem opens:

Lay down these words
Before your mind like rocks.
 placed solid, by hands
In choice of place, set
Before the body of the mind
 in space and time:
Solidity of bark, leaf, or wall
 riprap of things (21)

“Riprap” is the concluding poem of a collection by the same name; “these words” refer to Snyder's poetry. In the written poem, poetry becomes a material thing, with the solidity of rock, bark, and the like. He asks that his poems not be thought as abstract relationships between concepts, but as concrete relationships between the objects of experience (the poem continues, “The worlds like an endless / four-dimensional / Game of Go” (21)). Thus Tim Dean says, “This materializing of language — of which “Riprap” is Snyder's best early example — represents the effort to link poetry to the body, to work, and thus to what is taken as the immediacy of the real” (par. 9).

Just as riprap is laid over a slick rock, Snyder's poetry, by virtue of its possibilities as poetry, gives traction to the expression of that which would otherwise be inaccessible to language—the wild. “The true poem,” Snyder suggests, “is walking that edge between what can be said and that which cannot be said” (*Real* 21). In the poem “Coyote Valley Spring,” he writes:

Cubs
tumble in the damp leaves
Deer, bear, squirrel.
fresh winds scour the
spring stars.
rocks crumble
deep mud hardens
under heavy hills.

shifting things
birds, weeds,
slip through the air
through eyes and ears,

Coyote valley. (*Turtle Island* 15)

The dichotomy projected here between “civilized” and “wild” — which reflects both the alienation expressed in “The Call of the Wild” and the contradictions occupying much of Snyder's thought and work — is a *traversable* dichotomy. The wild is not inaccessible to us; rather, it can be encountered in “frontier” moments where civilization and wildness meet, and, as I have been arguing in this paper, through articulations of poetry that hang by a thread from the edge of the expressible.

But we are still left with Snyder's central question: “Where do we start to resolve the dichotomy of the civilized and the wild?” (*Practice* 16). The experiential and poetic points of contact reflected in Snyder's poetry are crucial to addressing this question, but an inquiry into the manner in which Snyder envisions our capacity to address this dichotomy, and the way in which he considers his own work a part of this project, will require much further exploration and thought.

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Anticipations of Jungian Imagination in Wordsworth's Poetry

Jolene Howard

Regarding the poet, Carl Jung eloquently states, "he entralls and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring" (*Portable Jung* 321). Such an understanding of poetry reveals the personal conscious and unconscious images of the poet's mind as well as the collective unconscious images universal to the human race. The possibility then arises of "seeing into a mirror darkly" the image of self transposed onto past, present, and future ages; the destiny of the individual becomes entwined with the destiny of mankind; the primordial images conjured up by the poet bring contemporary meaning to human psychology.

Certain images and notions transcend time and can be recognized in a flow of ideas from Plato to Descartes to Spinoza to Kant to Wordsworth to Jung. In reading the poetry of William Wordsworth, it becomes evident that he anticipates some of the key ideas later formulated by Jung for psychoanalytical purposes. Exploring the psychoanalytical concepts of Carl Jung in the poetry of William Wordsworth creates a more complete understanding of *The Prelude*, promotes a deeper self-awareness, and generates a universal connection to nature and humankind.

Although *The Prelude* was not published until after Wordsworth's death in 1850 at the age of eighty, he began writing it in 1799, completed it in 1805, and continued to make revisions to it throughout most of his life. In this epic poem, he chronicles what seems to be an idyllic childhood spent in the rapture of nature in spite of the death of his mother when he was eight years old and the sudden

death of his father only five years later. Wordsworth's freedom to explore the countryside as well as his avid love of books informs his proclivity for poetry. Poetic memories and images drawn from his childhood seem to encourage the foundation for psychic mending and sustenance after his self-admitted breakdown, which was caused in part by his disillusionment with the French Revolution.

Wordsworth displays a great capacity for childlike imagination (a practice Jung encourages for tapping into the unconscious), as a means for freeing a mind "wearied out with contrarities" (*Prelude* 11.304). In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth not only recounts childhood images, but also tracks his years at Cambridge, his many physical journeys through the countryside of England and France, and his spiritual dreams and visions, all while including imaginative tales of history and mythology.

Wordsworth is a master poet adept at combining his personal experiences with a universal vision. In *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth declares, "the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time...it is as immortal as the heart of man" (271). His poetry, specifically *The Prelude*, does just what he declares — it ties together the passion and knowledge that informs and influences Wordsworth's system of philosophy, and Wordsworth is influenced by an eclectic group of philosophers and poets.

From his fellow poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, he explores the ways to transcend grief and suffering through mankind's spiritual connection to nature; his politics are shaped by Locke's liberal theory of man's

natural rights, Rousseau's republicanism in *The Social Contract*, and William Godwin's rationalism in *Political Justice*; his poetic style, while remaining uniquely creative, borrows from a host of poets including Alexander Pope and John Milton; his philosophy of religion, spirituality and psychology draws from Plato's ideas of knowledge and belief, mind and soul, Baruch Spinoza's pantheism, David Hartley's associationism, and Kant's ideas of the sublime, all of which blend to form his unique brand of Christianity. In the mingling of all these different thoughts and beliefs, Wordsworth reaches back in knowledge and looks forward in faith and imagination.

Seeing the way these influences span centuries of thought, Wordsworth believes there must be a thread connecting the human race, a thread that surpasses time and place. In this respect, ideas incorporated into Wordsworth's poetry offer a rich opportunity for exploring some of the analytical notions operating in Jungian psychoanalysis. Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *The Prelude* chronicles physical journeys that coalesce as metaphors of his spiritual journey, encompassing his mental crisis and recovery. Wordsworth refers to *The Prelude* as "the poem on the growth of my own mind." As such, the poem reveals the godlike powers of the human mind as it interacts with nature, spontaneous imagination, and the influences of the past (Wordsworth 322).

Viewing *The Prelude* through a Jungian lens can provide interesting insight into the extraordinary creative forces shaping the poetry of Wordsworth. Although William Wordsworth was born nearly 100 years prior to Carl Jung, one can discern a startling correspondence between the dreams and images of Wordsworth's poetry and the psychoanalytic concepts of Jung.

In terms reminiscent of Wordsworth, Jung believes in what he calls "primordial images" or the "collective unconscious,"

which he defines as "a certain psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity" (*Modern Man* 165). In a letter to Isabella Fenwick, Wordsworth terms this disposition "a prior state of existence" (307). While he is not claiming to believe in reincarnation, he does have in mind a pre-existence of the soul that explains common human experience.

Although Wordsworth's beliefs do not necessarily prove a correspondence to Jung's belief in the collective unconscious, they do provide an area of interest for possible links between the two notions. Regarding Wordsworth's opinion of pre-existence, Solomon Francis Gingerich writes in *Essays in the Romantic Poets* that, "The use that he makes of the Platonic 'shadowy recollections' as a poet is that they suggest a connection, a continuous existence of the soul, from the past to the present through that mysterious period we call birth" (149).

While Gingerich supposes Wordsworth only uses this "shadowy recollection" as a literary device to convey to the reader a sense of epic imagination, I would argue that Wordsworth has incorporated this Platonic element into his epistemological hypothesis. Wordsworth makes this Platonic reference in "Ode," a deeply personal and emotional poem he calls "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." The title itself professes his belief in immortality, an idea he broadens when he writes:

Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal
 Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing.
 (9.144-152)

Wordsworth's language frequently presupposes an eternal guide instinctual to

our very nature in phrases such as “nature yet remembers,” “first affections,” “high instincts,” “primal sympathy,” “man’s unconquerable mind,” or “eternity of thought” and “everlasting motion.” His language is not simply a device, but a means of healing for himself and for humanity. For Wordsworth, expression through language is a form of self-analysis much like the psychoanalysis Jung practiced with his patients by means of dream interpretation and talk therapy. Addressing Fenwick, Wordsworth writes: “I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a Poet” (307).

Jung echoes these words of Wordsworth when he says that a work of art “should rise far above the realm of personal life and speak from the spirit and heart of the poet as man to the spirit and heart of mankind” (*Modern Man* 168). Wordsworth and Coleridge both viewed their poetry in autobiographical terms. Wordsworth in particular hoped to find a way to improve the human condition by creating and sharing the imaginative process by fulfilling his calling as a poet. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* Jung claims that “what is of particular importance for the study of literature in these manifestations of the collective unconscious is that they are compensatory to the conscious attitude” (165).

In the visions and imaginations of Wordsworth’s poetry an equilibrium or balance can be achieved to compensate for any present or momentary deficiencies that occurred during his mental crisis. Tapping into the collective unconscious helps facilitate Wordsworth’s recovery through manifestations of his imagination, and may also promote a healing in the psyche of individual readers. Jung further states, “Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought

to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance to everyone living in that age” (166). I would extend this point to include readers from any period, not just the poet’s contemporary readers.

To define and illustrate Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious, it is necessary to consider the Jungian archetypes that may also be found in Wordsworth’s poetry. The collective unconscious, where the archetypes or mythological images are contained, can be further defined as a psychic inheritance; it is the collection of experiences and knowledge that Jung believes all humans are born with.

These archetypes are unlearned instincts that are not immediately accessed by the conscious mind, although they do influence the individual’s conduct and experiences, especially those emotional encounters that transcend the physical. The child is a Jungian archetype that Wordsworth consistently portrays in *The Prelude*. By introducing autobiographical resonances into *The Prelude*, Wordsworth attempts to capture the hope, promise and innocence of his childhood. His mythological pursuit of the child who possesses the simplicity of youth, while yet attaining the wisdom of a sage, is poignantly rendered in the following lines from *Book Second*:

Ah! Is there One who ever has been young
Nor needs a warning voice to tame the
 pride
Of intellect, and virtue’s self-esteem?
One is there, though the wisest and the best
Of all mankind, who covets not at times
Union that cannot be; who would not give,
If so he might, to duty and to truth
The eagerness of infantine desire?
A tranquillizing spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
The vacancy between me and those days,
Which yet have such self-presence in my
 mind,
That, musing on them, often do I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other Being. (2.19-33)

As reflected in this passage, Wordsworth's archetypal child captures the essence of both his past self and his present self. The child becomes nearly god-like as "some other Being" providing a sense of freedom from the chains of adulthood. While retaining childlike innocence, the adult can experience a rebirth that allows the knowledge of age to mingle with the purity of youth. Wordsworth calls on the "Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe! / Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought" who in childhood taught "The passions that build up our human Soul, / Not with the mean and vulgar works of man, / But with high objects, with enduring things, / With life and nature" (1.401-402, 407-410).

The valuable lessons learned in childhood become "doomed to sleep / Until maturer seasons called them forth / To impregnate and to elevate the mind," and to offer hope for the future when "I might fetch / Invigorating thought from former years; / Might fix the wavering balance of my mind, / And haply meet reproaches too" (1.594-596, 621-624). In this respect, Wordsworth's self-analysis encourages both his unconscious and his sleeping memories to bubble up into his conscious mind, which in turn helps to create a balanced mind at peace with the present.

Wordsworth's attempt at self-healing leads him to further explore the connection he feels with nature and humankind. In *The Prelude, Book Third* he expresses the collective inherent points and memories that each person shares:

It lies far hidden from the reach of words,
Points have we, all of us, within our Souls,
Where all stand single: this I feel, and make
Breathings for incommunicable powers.
But is not each a memory to himself?
And, therefore, now that we must quit this
theme,
I am not heartless; for there's not a man
That lives who hath not known his god-like
hours,

And feels not what an empire we inherit,
As natural Beings, in the strength of
Nature. (3.187-196)

The "empire we inherit" is internal as well as external. Wordsworth found healing "in the strength of Nature," and in the unconscious images common to all.

In addition to prefiguring Jung's notions of the collective unconscious (reflecting similar ideas regarding genetic memory), Wordsworth also seeks, in his own words, to "engage the response of the whole man" utilizing what Jung will later refer to as the four functions of *thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition*. Wordsworth utilizes these four functions in his poetry.

Jung's four functions are said to provide a complete approach to the psychology of man. On his view, *thinking* supplies the rational reflection needed to make reasonable conclusions—as "...a Power / That is the visible quality and shape / And image of right reason" (Prelude 13.20-22). *Feeling* furnishes hope and regret, which in turn enables discriminating value judgments—facilitated by Wordsworth's "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Preface 273). *Sensation* provides the awareness of conscious sensory perception—"Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense" (Prelude 1.551). And *intuition* provides the needed perception of unconscious contents and connections—or what Wordsworth terms the mind's "native instincts" (Prelude 3.99).

When Wordsworth describes the instincts of the poet, he declares the principle of pleasure to be that "by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves" (Preface 270). Wordsworth often refers in his poems to the motions of the mind, to the feelings associated with time and memory, to the sensations experienced during communion with nature, and to the confidence in man's intuitive convictions. In this way, he attempts to address the complete psychology of man in a manner that effectively mirrors

(and clearly anticipates) Jung's four functions.

Although Jung's four functions were developed as a way to classify psychological types, each of the four characteristics are co-present in each individual in varying degrees. Balance and wholeness can be achieved only when each function is developed to the individual's full potential. Similarly, in his exploration of the mind and how it develops, Wordsworth considers how reason and science and experience and feeling affect a person. In the following passage, Wordsworth discusses boundaries and distinctions that arise as a result of reception and perception:

And thou wilt doubt with me, less aptly
skilled
Than many are to range the faculties
In scale and order, class the cabinet
Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase
Run through the history and birth of each
As of a single independent thing.
Hard task, vain hope, to analyse the mind,
If each most obvious and particular
thought,
Not in a mystical and idle sense,
But in the words of reason deeply weighed,
Hath no beginning. (2.222-232)

Here, Wordsworth realizes the difficulty in analyzing the mind, but he understands that thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition all have their place in the development of the intellect. As the four functions work together, they produce "gentle agitations of the mind" that can activate "the visionary power" (2.299, 312). Because of the different influences on Wordsworth's philosophy, he pursues the blending of reason and sensation within himself. He offers this as a lofty goal for the individual to pursue as a way of connecting with "that universal power." This connection is "one continuous stream; a mind sustained / By recognitions of transcendent power/In sense, conducting to ideal form; / In soul, of more than mortal privilege" (14.74-77). The

pursuit of knowledge, both inward and outward, becomes an "endless occupation for the Soul,/Whether discursive or intuitive" (14.119-120). Wordsworth believes the powers of reason, whether human or divine, intuitive or rational, enable the individual to set in motion the active imagination.

In order to access the motions of the mind, the memories of the individual, and the collective unconscious, Jung presents the concept of "active imagination." Jung recognizes the value of the individual's imagination, and believes it to be a means of psychological recovery. According to Jung, "Every good idea and all creative work are the offspring of the imagination.... The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable" (*Active Imagination* 5). "Active imagination" is the means by which an individual can access forgotten childhood memories, the symbols and images from the collective unconscious enabling these "pictures ... to function in harmony with our ... conscious mind" (*Active Imagination* 95).

Wordsworth describes this phenomenon as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...from emotion recollected in tranquility" (*Preface* 273). Jung believes this mood of contemplation is the point when "successful composition generally begins" (*Preface* 273). Wordsworth's poetic reverie reflects this method of contemplation by allowing his own "spots of time" to mingle with the collective unconscious and ascend into his dreams and visions.

Wordsworth's recollections of these "spots of time" are apparent throughout the fourteen books of *The Prelude*. Viewing Wordsworth as an educator, Gordon Kent Thomas proposes that these "spots of time" "are meant chiefly as examples and encouragement to us to come up with our own bases of mental repair and nourishment" (153). Some of Wordsworth's most vivid recollections are of his childhood, such as the passage where he recounts his "act of stealth

/ And troubled pleasure” when he steals “a little Boat tied to a Willow-tree” (1.358, 361-362). Soon after he starts “heaving through the Water like a swan,” a “craggy Steep...black and huge” looms large in his vision “with purpose of its own / And measured motion, like a living Thing/Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned” (1.377-385).

Wordsworth’s active imagination conjures up Kant’s terrifying sublime as he recalls the encounter with the mountain that leaves him trembling and “in grave / And serious mood” (1.389-390). In *Time and Mind in Wordsworth’s Poetry*, Jeffrey Baker describes “The real power of Wordsworth’s moments is not their frozenness or their solidity, but the immense energy within them, their power to make the reader’s imagination work backward and forward in an instant” (145). This “spot of time” in Wordsworth’s childhood becomes a fluid moment reminding him of the power of nature and the role of nature as a teacher. From this terrifying episode Wordsworth experiences the consequences of his actions, and in this very manner nature continues to be a reminder throughout his lifetime.

Jung believes the ability to listen to this inner voice allows the unconscious to *come up through* the active imagination. He tells us “The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life—in them everything essential was decided” (*Active Imagination* 41). Wordsworth’s capacity to listen to his inner voice, together with his communion with nature, serves to inspire and lift his “visionary power.” He recalls how “in those moments such a holy calm / Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes / Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw / Appeared like something in myself, a dream, / A prospect in the mind” (2.349-353). For Wordsworth, and for others willing to look inward, contemplating the

inner man is a therapeutic exercise that can lead to catharsis.

In addition to self-reflection, the imagination’s interplay with the forces of nature also leads to self-discovery. *The Prelude* tells the story of Wordsworth’s penultimate experience at Mt. Snowdon where he feels “a balance, an ennobling interchange / Of action from without, and from within” (13.374-375). In *Wordsworth and the Motions of the Mind*, Gordon Kent Thomas says of the Mt. Snowdon experience, “it was a vision given not only for the poet’s personal education and edification but for his poetry, for that greater purpose of enabling him to be, on the subject of this vision, a man speaking to men” (149).

Wordsworth shares the extraordinary impact of the vision, recalling the “spot of time” where “I beheld the emblem of a Mind/That feeds upon infinity...a mind sustained/By recognitions of transcendent power...that glorious faculty/That higher minds bear with them as their own” (14.70-90). For Wordsworth, this moment not only becomes an important step in his own mental and emotional development, but it also becomes a tool to share with the reader “a world...that was fit / To be transmitted and to other eyes / Made visible” (13.369-371).

Wordsworth’s desire for community causes him to search for a path of connection to others, “to hold fit converse with the spiritual world, / and with the generations of mankind / Spread over time, past, present, and to come” (14.108-110). His “glorious faculty” is the essence of Jung’s creative imagination that enables readers to search for their own “spots of time.”

In *A Jungian Approach to Literature*, Bettina Knapp aims to demonstrate the universal characteristic of Jungian archetypal analysis and criticism. She offers a revealing description of the broad range of these encounters in the following passage:

Such encounters may be painful or joyous, terrifying or serene; hopefully, they will prove enlightening, involve the readers in the writings discussed so that they may understand how and why certain creative works speak and reach them today and why others do not. Energized in this manner, readers might go a step further and explore the literary work in question and through association relate their discoveries to aspects of their own personalities. Self-awareness may then be increased; and the understanding of the individual's function and role in society may be broadened. Reading now becomes not merely an intellectual adventure but an excitingly helpful living experience. (xi)

For Wordsworth, these encounters with his imagination work in conjunction with nature to aid him in the recovery of his "...true self...A Poet...my office upon earth" (*Prelude* 11.342-347). In *Time and Mind in Wordsworth's Poetry*, Jeffrey Baker claims that Wordsworth's imagination is influenced by the doctrine of associationism, which serves to motivate his "notion that a life lived in daily presence of natural beauty must inevitably predispose the mind to serenity and benevolence" (20). Wordsworth hints at his interest in the doctrine of associationism when summarizing the purpose of his poetry in *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*: "I have also informed my reader what this purpose will be found principally to be: namely, to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement" (265). Examples of Wordsworth's own experiences recollected in a state of excitement, a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," are associated with childhood events, encounters with nature, and political upheavals.

Associationism is a psychological theory developed by David Hartley (1705-1757), and it is quite possible Wordsworth became acquainted with the psychologist's ideas during his close friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a one-time proponent of

the theory. Associationism began as a theory that all consciousness is associated with sense experiences that combine in the mind, eventually producing memories and imaginations. There are conflicting versions of this philosophy ranging from empirical association to rational association. John Locke (1632-1704) believes the conscious is without any innate capabilities which conflicts with Jung's idea of genetic intuition and memory; Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) claims that knowledge is God-given and based on reason; and David Hume (1711-1776) calls it "experimental psychology" believing the mind made sense of the world by mirroring nature.

This last idea seems to closely coincide with the Wordsworthian idea of accepting nature as the teacher of ethics and morality, as the path to spiritual enlightenment, and as the guide to imagination and intuitive understanding. Regardless of his influences, Wordsworth presents his poetry in a subjunctive voice, allowing readers to explore their own questions and theories concerning the notions presented, which encompass Kant's philosophy of rationalism as well as Hume's sense empiricism.

Wordsworth repeatedly links ideas and feelings with memories and imaginings throughout *The Prelude*. Baker claims in this regard that Wordsworth's "notions of the nature of imagination, the relation of sense to soul, and the origin of mystical vision...and of the contrast between intuitive wisdom and scientific reason" include all motions of the mind (63). If accurate, such a claim would support the idea that Wordsworth engages Jung's four functions in his poetry, and in the process provides a view on all aspects of the mind of man. Wordsworth's method of teaching through his poetry is inclusive of the whole man. He does not deny the spiritual in favor of the material; he does not deny feelings in favor of rational thought; and he does not deny intuition in favor of

scientific knowledge. Instead, Wordsworth builds “up a Work that shall endure,” and as a “Prophet of Nature” he becomes “A lasting inspiration, sanctified/By reason, blest by faith” (Prelude 14.311, 446-448). In this

way, William Wordsworth reaches back in time in search of collective experiences that will enlighten and inspire the imagination of future generations.

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Exiles and Transnationals: 19th Century Irish and Contemporary Mexican Immigration to the United States

Therese A. Lunt

When confronted with current discussions of immigration reform in the United States, one may easily experience a sense of déjà vu. Rancor behind contemporary concerns over immigrant issues conjures memories of past xenophobias and nativisms. Interesting parallels emerge, revealing as much about the attitudes of those who consider themselves natives as to the experience of the emigrants. One such analogy can be drawn between Irish immigration to the United States in the nineteenth century and the complex tapestry of legal and undocumented Mexican immigrants who have migrated to the United States in recent years. Between 1845 and 1855, 1.5 million people fled famine, starvation and death in Ireland for succor in the United States, representing the first mass immigration to the U.S.¹ As the country of origin for the largest contemporary percentage of legal and undocumented immigrants to the United States, Mexico provides a striking counterpart to the Irish experience.² Taken together, these two phenomena bookend the immigrant experience in the United States, and, as such, seem worthy of comparison.

Even a casual perusal reveals similarities between these two migratory events: both migrations were precipitated by hardship in the countries of origin; both groups saw the prospect for an improved quality of life in the United States; both groups faced language and cultural barriers; both groups experienced discrimination and exploitation; and both were predominantly Catholic. While research into the comparison between the Irish and Mexican emigrations confirms these and other synonymies, it also reveals sharp differences that are quite revealing with respect to global intercourse within the two timeframes. Isolating the similarities between these two

phenomena motivates intriguing anecdotal discourse. Isolating differences, on the other hand, unveils societal changes that many find disturbing. By far the greatest variance between nineteenth-century Irish and current Mexican immigration to the United States is in the respective levels of assimilation of their diasporas. This research explores the Irish and Mexican immigrant experience in the United States, how they are similar and in what ways they differ. The importance of remaining mindful of the past when considering the present will be discussed, as will the equal gravity of adapting expectations and policies to modern times.

“Emigrants” leave their native land and become “immigrants” upon arrival in their host country.³ The nineteenth century Irish emigrants were to become permanent immigrants, considering themselves exiles with no hope of returning to Ireland.⁴ Contemporary Mexican emigrants to the United States can more accurately be described as transnational, for they tend to “remain substantially engaged (economically, politically and culturally) in their newly adopted lands and in their communities of origin, moving back and forth in ways seldom seen in previous eras of large-scale immigration.”⁵ Immigration is frequently identified metaphorically with water movements in a curious linguistic construct, paralleling the movement of peoples with that of a wave, tide or flood. Water in movement, however, typically recedes; perhaps this pervasive imagery is indicative of underlying native sentiments that immigrants do not belong and should not remain. While tidal ebb and flow might well be applied to the fluid movement of today’s Mexican trans-

nationals, it was not applicable to nineteenth century emigrant Irish; they came to stay.

Irish emigration to the United States in the nineteenth century represented the first discretionary mass transatlantic movement of peoples and as such was an important phenomenon that had far-reaching impacts on the burgeoning nation. Living conditions for the indigenous population in Ireland were harsh: English usurpation of the land and control of the export economy reduced almost all Irish - artisans, farmers and laborers alike - to lifestyles of abject poverty.⁶ Emigrants in the early part of the century were mostly Protestants with marketable skills who could afford to pay for their voyage and were able to contribute to the economy of their adoptive land.⁷ This trend changed as the century progressed, however, with many comparatively underprivileged Irish people turning to emigration as a way out of their untenable living conditions. By the mid-1830s poor Catholic emigrants began to comprise more than half of the exodus.⁸ The potato blight and resultant famine that struck Ireland between 1845 and 1855 turned emigration from that country into a veritable evacuation of sickly, starving paupers, who came to view themselves as exiles from their homeland rather than voluntary emigrants.

Like the Irish of a century and a half ago, Mexican emigrants to the United States today flee poverty and deprivation. An economic crisis in the mid-1990s involving a stock market crash that devalued the peso and resulted in wide-spread unemployment, known locally as *la crisis*, left many Mexican nationals with a choice similar to, but perhaps less desperate than, that of the earlier Irish: emigration or extreme poverty.⁹ Mexico's physical and social infrastructures are ill-equipped to offer aid to impoverished peasants. Implementation of the North America Free Trade Agreement in 1994, while promising to improve the lives of Mexican laborers, has actually had a

deleterious effect. Current news reports claim that, "19 million more Mexicans now live in poverty than before the pact was signed."¹⁰ Furthermore, the trade agreement has negatively impacted Mexico's agricultural class, with big agribusiness forcing more than "2 million Mexican farmers...off their land," between 1993 and 2002.¹¹ *Maquiladoras*, foreign controlled manufacturing plants, have exploited Mexican workers with harsh conditions, low wages, and government-supported restrictions on labor organization.¹² Unlike the Irish exiles, however, Mexican emigrants are often transnationals, moving back and forth across a border that remains porous in spite of efforts by vigilantes and the United States government to secure it.

In addition to internal "push" factors encouraging Irish and Mexican immigration, external "pull" dynamics lured emigrants to a perceived better life in the United States. The nineteenth century Industrial Revolution in the United States presented a need for unskilled laborers on the railroads, canals, docks and in mining and textile industries. The Irish fleeing starvation for work and sustenance in the United States were deemed, "...necessary to the development of the vast country."¹³ Many Irish emigrated with romantic concepts of a prosperous life that may best be described as mythical, expecting streets paved in gold and an easy life requiring little adaptation to their new surroundings.¹⁴ Chain migration, in the form of family members sent to the New World with a mandate to remit earnings home to fund transportation for kinsmen, contributed to the siren song of immigration to the comparatively affluent United States.¹⁵ Between the years of 1850 - 1855 Irish immigrants in America sent home almost six million dollars annually, which in today's economy would be more than \$137 million per year.¹⁶

Similarly, today's Mexican immigrants are desirous of a comfortable lifestyle

perceived as attainable in the United States but not in their home country. While the per capita gross domestic product in the States is estimated at \$41,600 for 2005, Mexico's is just one quarter of this amount, or roughly \$10,000.¹⁷ The percentage of the U.S. population subsisting below the poverty level is estimated at 12% (2004), while in Mexico it is 40% (2003).¹⁸ Mexico's apparently robust unemployment rate of 3.6% (compared to the U.S. rate of 5.1%) is clearly a misleading indicator if we factor in Mexico's estimated 25% *underemployment*.¹⁹ These statistics are indicative of a significantly higher standard of living for people living in the United States than for people living in Mexico, contributing to the motivation behind Mexican emigration. As with the Irish, kinship ties further the pull on Mexicans who desire to join family members who have already made the move north.²⁰ Remittances to Mexico from immigrants in the United States amounted to more than \$20 billion (2005), contributing to almost 3% of that country's gross domestic profit.²¹

Chain migration is a phenomenon associated with Mexican immigration today as much as it was with the Irish of the nineteenth century; Catholic and mutualistic emphasis on familial unity over individualistic aspiration encouraged chain migration then as it does now.²² Furthermore, it has been theorized that international migration as a whole is predicated on the pull of a segmented labor market within the host country.²³ This argument claims that, "...international migration stems from a relatively permanent demand for unskilled labor that is built into the economic structure of developed nations."²⁴ Both Irish exiles and transnational Mexicans have answered that demand in the United States.

It is a widely held misconception that famine Irish immigrants to the United States enjoyed the benefit of a common language with the inhabitants of their host country.

Between 1845 and 1855, Ireland lost a million people to death and another 1.8 million to emigration to North America, most of them to the United States.²⁵ The poorest among these exiles were Gaelic speakers from the southern and western provinces that represented from one fourth to one third of the exodus, or approximately half a million people with Gaelic as their primary language.²⁶ Port officials made note of entire shiploads of Irish emigrants unable to speak English; priests in Dublin considering a mission to the States were encouraged to learn Gaelic to facilitate their ministry among the Irish immigrants.²⁷ To assert that the Irish assimilated into North American society with greater ease than other immigrants by virtue of a common language is to perpetuate an erroneous myth.²⁸

Spanish-speaking Mexican immigrants to the United States today face the same language barrier that their Irish counterparts did in the nineteenth century. While it may well be argued that the Irish surely had some exposure to the *lingua franca* of their adoptive country through contact with the English in Ireland, the ubiquity of the English language in today's globalized environments ensures the applicability of that same argument to Mexican immigrants. Accommodation of Spanish speakers in the government and media could perhaps be regarded as more repressive and exploitive than benevolent. Nonetheless, the poorest emigrant paupers and peasants of each country were, and are, the least likely to speak any English and at the same time the most in need of that tool upon arrival. Earlier immigrants assisted the newly arrived Irish navigate through their adopted country in much the same way as established Mexican nationals in the United States help their compatriots. The Catholic Church established immigrant aid societies for both the Irish of the 19th century and the Mexicans of today.²⁹

It is well documented that the labor of Irish immigrants in the nineteenth century

was instrumental to the development of industry in the United States. The majority of famine emigrants lacked skills for employment and had lost faith in the land to provide subsistence; therefore they gravitated to urban areas and sought menial wage labor. Desperate to provide for themselves and their families both in the United States and Ireland, Irish workers were willing to undercut prevailing wages.³⁰ The influx of immigrants created an overabundance of unskilled laborers that increased job competition.³¹ Adding to the competition for jobs was the practice by employers of advertising abroad for foreign laborers, claiming that “hundreds of workers were needed in certain industries...when no such vacancies actually existed.”³² The intent behind the deception was to force native workers in the United States to accept lower wages.³³

Racism contributed to the employment contest as Irish men and women competed with freed Blacks for work previously dominated by the latter.³⁴ In the south, Irish immigrants were often employed for work considered too dangerous to risk the loss of capital invested in a slave. The preference was explained by a representative of a southern stevedoring business: “The niggers are worth too much to be risked here; if the Paddies are knocked overboard, or get their backs broke, nobody loses anything.”³⁵ Irish and Blacks competed “for the dirty, backbreaking, poorly paid jobs that white native Americans and emigrants from elsewhere generally disdained to perform.”³⁶ This observation correlates directly with similar claims about the necessity of Mexican migrant labor today.

The argument that immigrants have a history of working at jobs Americans refuse is an oversimplification of a complex socio-economical construct. In developed countries, earned wages contribute to a worker’s sense of identity through implications of merit and prestige.³⁷

Employers invest in education and training for workers in positions of high status and responsibility; much like the nineteenth-century African slave, these upper-tier employees represent human capital to the employer.³⁸ Unskilled labor, however, can be increased or reduced as demand dictates, thereby representing less of an investment. Attempting to use higher wages to attract workers to low-status positions involving tedious or difficult tasks is often economically unfeasible for employers. The prestige component of wage labor dictates that if the remuneration for those on the bottom rung of the employment hierarchy is raised, so it must be for all the others.³⁹ Furthermore, “When certain sectors of the opportunity structure are culturally coded as ‘immigrant jobs,’ they become stigmatized, and native workers tend to shun them almost regardless of wage dynamics.”⁴⁰ It is far easier and cost effective to utilize laborers with no social attachment to their wages. For employers, Mexican transnational workers fit this rubric conveniently, regarding wages as a means to comfort and security and having little cultural investment in a society in which they do not consider themselves members, thereby making palatable low-prestige labor at a reduced wage.⁴¹

In an interesting transmutation, social memory may be short and many times becomes idealized with mythologies and wishful interpretations. Patriotic fealty can inspire manipulations that are appealing but nonetheless erroneous. The claim that the United States is a “melting pot” of happily assimilated immigrants does not hold up to historical analysis. The famine Irish, in all areas of the United States, from New York to Sacramento

were disproportionately concentrated in the lowest-paid, least skilled, and most dangerous and insecure employment; with few exceptions, they also displayed the highest rates of transience, residential density and segregation, inadequate housing and

sanitation, commitments to prison and charity institutions, and excess mortality.⁴²

In fact, the emigrant Irish during the famine survived, on average, a mere six years once they reached American soil.⁴³ Irish treatment at the hands of those who considered themselves native was harsh; the immigrants were ridiculed on the streets, in print and on the stage.⁴⁴ “No Irish Need Apply” was a common posting among businesses seeking laborers, and little sympathy was proffered for the plight of the unemployed.⁴⁵ An Irish laborer eloquently and angrily penned his frustration, decrying that there was “no love for him – no protection of life – [he] can be shot down, run through, kicked, cuffed, spat on – and no redress but a response of ‘served the damn son of an Irish bitch right, damn him.’”⁴⁶ Anti-Catholic, and by extension Anti-Irish, sentiments found voice in the nativist movement of the short-lived, but nonetheless virulent, Know-Nothing party.

Anti-Mexican sentiment in the United States today parallels that held against the Irish in the past. Political activities of the Minuteman militia are reminiscent of Know-Nothing machinations.⁴⁷ Much as with the Irish, willingness to exploit Mexican laborers does not translate into their acceptance within American society. Mexican transnationals compose the bulk of migrant farm work today, engaging in tedious and often dangerous physical labor. Yet the current state of their available health care is in limbo, languishing in a report conducted in 2003 but held from the public “in clearance” by the Bush administration.⁴⁸ The overwhelming approval in 1994 of California’s proposition 187 to deny public education, social assistance, and health care services to undocumented immigrants speaks to an undercurrent of hostility toward the Mexican transnational “other.”⁴⁹ President Bush’s Secure Fence Act of 2006, while touted as an implement of national security in the wake of the terrorism events of September 11, 2001,

also embodies a thinly-veiled element of xenophobia reminiscent of the antebellum environment. Furthermore, it is doubtful that the expensive supplemental surveillance will prevent the compelling push and pull factors from exercising their seduction on transnationals unwilling or unable to migrate “legally.” Discussion of implementing a guest worker program in the United States conjures up images of the poorly administered Bracero program of 1942 through 1964, during which time “more than 4.5 million Mexican nationals were legally contracted for work in the United States.”⁵⁰ That such a plan is under consideration accentuates the segmented nature of today’s labor market and is tantamount to an admission of racial and class bias in filling the jobs at the bottom rungs of the employment hierarchy.

The face of immigration in the United States has changed. Between 1820 and the onset of the American Civil War, immigrants were largely of Western European stock, dominated by the Irish early on, and later by Germans.⁵¹ Today, almost fifty-two percent are from Latin America.⁵² Transatlantic emigration represented a commitment, both socially and financially, that facilitated assimilation; the United States/Mexico common border, conversely, facilitates transnationalism. For the Irish, emigration was a last resort, a decision made under extreme duress; many who would not have otherwise left Ireland believed that to remain would be fatal.⁵³ The devastation of famine coupled with a socio-economic environment hostile to native Irishmen counter-indicated any thought of returning home. A sense that they were exiles escaping conditions beyond their control stimulated their desire to assimilate into their adoptive society, as evidenced by one Irishman who advised his fellow immigrants to, “get rid as soon as possible of National peculiarities and set...down to adopt the ways and customs of the people.”⁵⁴ Assimilation was further

encouraged by newspaper editors who advised the Irish immigrants to emulate their new Yankee compatriots.⁵⁵ Contrast that with today's Mexican immigrant: improvements in transportation and communication have enabled transnationalism; government forms, media, education, and services are all offered in Spanish; Mexican foods, dress and customs have become incorporated into American culture as much as Americanisms have been adopted by Mexicans. Mexican transnationals in the United States today simply do not have the desperate need to assimilate that Irish exiles experienced in antebellum America.

Globalization has changed immigration. In Mexico, NAFTA has polarized the economic classes while the ubiquity of consumer information has created "structures of desire and consumption fantasies that local economies cannot fill."⁵⁶ To realize these desires and fantasies while maximizing economic potential, Mexican transnationals work across the border while retaining their familial and cultural allegiance to their home-country. Under such circumstances, is cultural assimilation a logical, or even relevant, expectation? In the United States, the impact of globalization is creating unease and distress as the increasingly large and nomadic Mexican transnational community exerts a disorienting effect on the "native" populace and is perceived as potentially menacing, thereby fueling a rise in xenophobia.⁵⁷

Ironically, an increase in *Irish* illegal immigration in the 1980s spawned the Irish Immigration Reform Movement, resulting in The Northern Ireland Visas for Peace and Reconciliation, which President Bill Clinton signed into effect in October of 1998.⁵⁸ The act allows for annual temporary visas of 4000 Irish nonimmigrant guest workers from disadvantaged areas of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.⁵⁹ Perhaps implementation of this Irish guest worker

program bodes well for a similar Mexican plan that will mitigate the shame of the Bracero debacle.

In exploring the similarities between nineteenth century Irish exiles and today's Mexican transnational, differences emerge that point to a necessary change in immigration attitude and approach. Traditional immigration theory espouses an anticipation of acculturation that is hegemonically oppressive in its expectation of a minority group to adopt the "cultural patterns of the host society."⁶⁰ Today's globalized environment seems to dictate a need to accommodate the immigrant as well as the native; it is absurd to exploit transnational labor and consumerism while protesting its fluid immigrant status. To counter xenophobia, we must remain mindful that immigration influxes in the past, as with the Irish, have contributed in countless ways to the richness of American society.

Note: my analysis has been supplemented with study-abroad travel to Ireland and Mexico. I spent the summer of 2006 taking Irish history and literature classes in Galway, Ireland. I have been to the famine museum in County Roscommon, walked a replica of a coffin ship, and talked with Irishmen who spoke of famine immigration like "going to the moon," so complete and horrifying was the break with their mother country. I studied Mexican history and Spanish in Morelos, Mexico during January of 2007 to advance my language skills and conduct further research. I interviewed a taxi driver in Cuernavaca who emigrated to Los Angeles for three months in 1985. He earned just enough money to return home and purchase his cab so he could provide for his family, exemplifying the actions of many Mexican laborers in the United States. Thus, active research in Ireland and Mexico complements and validates this comparative discussion of Irish exiles and Mexican transnationals.

Notes

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- ⁵ Suárez-Orozco, 9.
- ⁶ Miller, 35.
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- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.
- ⁹ Ruben Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* (New York: Picador, 2001), 10.
- ¹⁰ David Sirota, "Supply-and-Demand Solutions," *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco), 9 Apr. 2006. Available at <http://www.sfgate.com> Accessed 23 Nov. 2006.
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- ¹⁴ Miller, 268.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.
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- ¹⁷ CIA *The World Factbook*. Last updated 14 Nov. 2006. Available at <http://www.cia.gov> Accessed 22 Nov. 2006
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
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- ²⁰ Nancy Forner, "The Immigrant Family: Cultural Legacies and Cultural Changes." In *The New Immigration: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, eds. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 159.
- ²¹ Inter-American Development Bank "Remittances 2005: Promoting Financial Democracy." (Washington, D.C.: Multilateral Investment Fund, 2006), 11.
- ²² Miller, 270 and Devra Weber, "Historical Perspectives on Transnational Mexican Workers in California." In *Border Crossings: Mexican and Mexican-American Workers*, ed. John Mason Hart (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998), 219.
- ²³ Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand and Nolan J. Malone, "Principles of Operation: Theories of International Migration." In *The New Immigration: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, eds. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 26.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 297.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 40.
- ²⁹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Emigrant Aid Societies." Available at <http://www.newadvent.com> Accessed 17 Nov. 2006. and
- ³⁰ Ignatiev, 109.
- ³¹ Miller, 315.
- ³² U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Temporary Migration to the United States: Nonimmigrant Admissions Under U.S. Immigration Law" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, 2006), 47.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Ignatiev, 98 and Miller, 318.

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- ³⁵ Ignatiev, 109.
- ³⁶ Miller, 318.
- ³⁷ Massey, Durand and Malone, 26.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 27.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Suárez-Orozco, 10.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 27-28.
- ⁴² Miller, 315.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 319.
- ⁴⁴ Knobel, 21.
- ⁴⁵ Miller, 323.
- ⁴⁶ M. J. Adams, letter in *Cork Examiner*, 10 Aug. 1860. Qtd. in Miller, 323.
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Look, this is terrible!



In Muslim countries, women must completely cover their bodies.



Man, that's like, total oppression!

Thank goodness nothing like that happens here in the United States.



Why Study the Hmong Population?

Susan Lao

Many people in the United States have never heard of the ethnic group Hmong. Just recently I met a Cambodian girl from Long Beach, California. She asked me about my nationality. She was surprised to learn I was Hmong. She said she'd never heard of this ethnic group before and then asked me what country we are from. (We're from Laos, which borders Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Myanmar). Her question drew me back to a middle school memory when I had a pen pal from Maryland. He asked about my nationality and when I told him I was Hmong, he expressed surprise and confessed that he had never heard of this ethnic group before. Having assumed that the Hmong population was pretty well known, I suddenly realized there were probably many people in the world who have not heard of the Hmong population.

One reason why I thought our population is well known is because of why we are here in America. But because the circumstances surrounding our immigration were never written into American History books (including covert participation with the French in World War II and covert support for American troops during the "Secret War" component of the Vietnam War), many people have simply not heard of us. Strangely, I would have to admit that many people are not aware of why or how the Hmong people came to America. And now that I think about it, I grew up hearing and learning about American history but I have never really stopped to learn why the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Pakistan, Indian, and many other ethnic groups are here in America. I never thought about this until faced with the invisibility of my own origins. Why *are* they here? I am pretty sure they all have their own purposes and reasoning; I'm sure they all have their own stories to tell. To help us all begin to see the importance of understanding

these stories I will share a slice of my own story, the slice reflecting my ethnic/immigrant status, to help reveal why I am in the United States, and why the *Hmong people* are here.

The true matter behind why the Hmong people are here in the United States can be traced to the Secret War in World War II. The Hmong fought alongside the French in opposition to the Japanese invasion and occupation of Indochina. When the war was over, the French maintained their colonial rule of French Indochina. This led Vietnam to seek after independence, which produced two decades of war and bloodshed with the military and economic support of Communist China and the Soviet Union (Dirks, 1999). In the late 1950's, as the French withdrew from Vietnam, the United States government began fearing for other countries in the region that might fall into this communist system. "It was thought that if Vietnam became communist then other countries of the Indochina region would also fall to communism" (Dirks, 1999, p. 9). The Hmong soon became actively involved with the American CIA, due in large part to their acts of loyalty and the abilities they had shown fighting alongside the French in World War II. The United States decided to help support the Royal Lao military and began utilizing the Hmong in covert missions. With the onset of these collaborations organized by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the secret war begins in Laos in 1960.

The secret war lasted the entire decade, at which point the count of Hmong deaths exceeded the count of American deaths (Dirks, 1999). With the U.S. pullout from Vietnam, Laos quickly fell to the Communists and the Hmong had to flee for their lives. They had no alternative. Many escaped by crossing the Mekong River (a river that separates Laos and Thailand) only to spend years to follow living in Thai refugee camps.

Many lives were lost crossing the Mekong River. Over time, the refugee Hmong were dispersed to various countries. 75% of the Hmong chose to immigrate to France, Canada, or the U.S. (Dirks, 1999).

Before the war, Hmong people had been a farming people living up in the high mountains of Laos. Hmong daughters were generally required to do all the housework along with their normal field work. The sons were required to perform all the hard labor work along with taking care of the fields and live stock. There were only a few Hmong family who could afford to send their sons to school. Education was expensive, so many Hmong children were unable to attend school. There were never more than a few Hmong boys in Laotian schoolrooms; rarely did girls receive any formal education in Laos (Dirks, 1999). The language taught in school was Laotian, not Hmong. Therefore those who attended school, starting from the first grade level, had to be able to understand and comprehend the language used in school.

We can see that the Hmong population has come a long way in developing the ability to acquire a different language. Since Hmong immigrated here, they have been limited in English speaking. It seems like the Hmong are caught in a cycle of always having to learn and adapt to other cultures. In Laos, Hmong had to learn how to speak in Laos in order to attend school. Now here in the U.S. Hmong people must learn English. Yet, even though the Hmong are in this situation, they still try to maintain their cultural values and status.

At stake is the fate of Hmong language. As Hmong people have immigrated to the

U.S., they have adapted to American culture and language. English is now the dominant language in the world of Hmong children. They speak less and less Hmong. As a result, cultural values have started to shift: Hmong Americans are more likely to value education, not farming (like in the old days). But while I'm a reflection of these changes in culture, I'm still interested in knowing more about my parents' perceptions regarding their native language. For instance: How do immigrant Hmong parents feel about the changes they have witnessed as a result of moving to the U.S.? What does it mean that they speak to their child in Hmong while their child responds back in English? Why do Hmong parents still think it is important to maintain their native language? What will they do to help maintain their native language and values in the lives of their children?

These are important factors to consider, for, in the end, the Hmong will either lose or maintain their language. There is no alternative. I find it interesting that with all the hardships Hmong parents have endured -- in Laos, in the Thai refugee camps, and in the foreign world of America -- some still work to keep their native language alive. Although I myself speak very little Hmong, I do think it is important to keep our native language alive. This is why I think it would be interesting to study the perceptions of Hmong parents, especially with respect to their language and the values and culture sustained by its preservation. After all, only the parents can help their children maintain their native language. It has become a part of my story. Perhaps it's a small part of your story, as well.

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Violence in the Name of Identity

Nikki Boudreau

Ask anyone to define their identity and they will immediately rattle off a list of affiliations: race, gender, nationality, religion. Upon closer inspection, however, the subject of identity is much more complicated and conflicted. While an individual considers that their own identity is what makes them unique, their natural response is to define it by a characteristic that associates them with a larger group. An “us” versus “them” mentality results because whenever a person finds belonging with one group, it simultaneously separates from all other groups. Unfortunately, the tragedy in this need to belong is that it ultimately makes it impossible to identify with the largest of affiliations—the human race. Furthermore, this situation is becoming increasingly exacerbated as advancing communication technology encourages world cultures to grow more similar. This gives individuals even more reason to feel threatened because they feel that the qualities that are specific to their culture are coming under attack by this homogenization of world culture. This fear, this desperate need to belong, causes many people to commit fanatical and murderous crimes in the name of their identity.

In his book *In the Name of Identity*,¹ Amin Maalouf explores how violence can erupt between different groups of people when they limit the definition of their identity to only one facet of their being. This belief that an individual is defined essentially by their nationality, race, language, or religion “presupposes that ‘deep down inside’ everyone there is just one affiliation that really matters, a kind of ‘fundamental truth’ about each individual, an ‘essence’

determined once and for all at birth, never to change thereafter” (2). This, Maalouf explains, is “a recipe for massacres” (5). A Christian who grew up in Lebanon and later moved to France, Maalouf has personally felt the conflict that can exist between different elements of a person’s identity. Quite simply, he writes that people “often see themselves in terms of whichever one of their allegiances is most under attack” (26). Recalling the nights he spent with his pregnant wife and young son in an air-raid shelter, Maalouf knows that “fear might make anyone take to crime” (27).

His focus on the conflict between the Middle East and the West gives relevant insight to contemporary world events. However, he also emphasizes that the examples he puts forth are not special cases. Every individual is a unique combination of allegiances which have the potential to come into conflict with one another—whether they are ties to a profession, an institution, a village, a language, or a country. And whereas “each of these elements may be found separately in many individuals, the same combination of them is never encountered in different people, and it’s this that gives every individual richness and value and makes each human being unique and irreplaceable” (11). Early on in *Identity*, Maalouf argues against the skeptics who claim this tendency towards violence to be an innate characteristic of the human race. He explains that “many ideas that have been commonly accepted for centuries are no longer admissible today, among them the ‘natural’ ascendancy of men over women, the hierarchy between races, and even, closer to home, apartheid and the various other kinds of segregation” (34). Despite the fact that his suggestions are admirable and inspiring, their plausibility is sometimes doubtful.

¹ Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Penguin Books, 2000)

Maalouf also notes differences in the development of the West and the Middle East and how this has led to conflict between the two. First, Maalouf defies the notion that Christianity is inherently good and Islam innately evil. By showing that Christianity's contemporary tolerance has arisen from centuries of violence, whereas Islam's current tendency towards violence has erupted from a long period of remarkable tolerance, Maalouf notes that while the text of a religion does not change, people's interpretations of it clearly do. In order to remain relevant and preserve its place in society, western religion relaxed and updated its doctrine. Conversely, Islam never modernized. Also, the West came to power when, for the first time, the technical means for world dominance were available. Nor can the influence of economics be ignored, as the Middle East is "poor, downtrodden and derided, while the West is rich and powerful" (64).

Citing how the past efforts of Egypt to modernize were stomped out by Great Britain, Maalouf shows that the West desires only obedience and not imitation. As a result, much of the rest of world fears that modernization is simply Americanization and that they must "admit that their ways were out of date, that everything they produced was worthless compared with what was produced by the West, that their attachment to traditional medicine was superstitious, their military glory just a memory, the great men they had been brought up to revere—the poets, scholars, soldiers, saints and travelers—disregarded by the rest of the world, their religion suspected of barbarism, their language now studied only by a handful of specialists, while they had to learn other people's languages if they wanted to survive and work and remain in contact with the rest of mankind" (74-75).

The world, Maalouf notes, is entering a unique phase in which knowledge advances at a rapid speed, but the dissemination of

knowledge is even faster, thus leading all societies to become increasingly alike. In this era of "harmonization and dissonance," humankind has never "had so many things in common—knowledge, points of reference, images, words, instruments and tools of all kinds. But this only increases their desire to assert their differences" (93). To help alleviate the danger of future conflict, Maalouf proposes a few ideas. Firstly, he explains that identity must be seen as "the sum of all our allegiances, and, within it, allegiance to the human community itself would become increasingly important, until one day it would become the chief allegiance, though without destroying our many individual affiliations" (100). Secondly, he makes the somewhat obvious point that only in "the context of democracy [can] the question of choice arises" (148) but adds depths to this observation by noting that the "law of the majority" is sometimes synonymous with "tyranny, slavery and discrimination" (152). As a remedy, he emphasizes the need for safeguards, such as the United Kingdom's special electoral system that does not depend solely on majority rule because of the problem of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. Maalouf also dreams of the day in which a presidential candidate will be judged for his "human qualities" rather than his religious and ethnic affiliations. Thirdly, he explains that religion will never become obsolete because human beings will always have spiritual needs—however, religion does not have to be associated with the need to belong to a group, and spiritual needs can be fulfilled without religion.

In addition, he points out that language cannot be separated from identity any more than can our nationality or religion. His intriguing proposal is that every individual should speak three languages: the language of ones origin, English, and a third language of ones choice. Knowing English is crucial, but

alone it is not enough. Knowing two languages in addition to the language of one's origin would instantly connect every person to a much vaster population of the world, and to a greater array of resources in art and literature. However, it is doubtful whether the desire or even the need exists for so many people to be multilingual. Most individuals can function in everyday life quite well knowing only one language. Also, in countries such as the United States, the educational system is only rarely structured to require or encourage the learning of multiple languages.

In a very effective way, Maalouf's *In the Name of Identity* provides us with a cultural and historical understanding of the current conflict between the Middle East and the West. Maalouf explores a number of widely discussed issues, but also adds uncommon insight to help derail several striking misconceptions about the Middle East and the West.

In the final analysis, Maalouf's hopeful projections for the future might appear overly optimistic, especially in the context of the discouraging struggle between the United States and Iraq, ongoing contestation in the Middle East, and issues concerning undocumented immigrants in the U.S.. After all, dealing with identity on an individual level can be an immense struggle in itself — indeed, we must wonder where this restructuring begins, and just whose responsibility it is to attempt it on a more massive level. The day when people can learn to forsake their tribal associations and embrace the human race as a whole appears to be a long way off, if not simply beyond reach. However, Maalouf's insights do not fail to inspire or cause the reader to question his or her own role in the global conflicts caused by the search for identity.

A GOOD MARRIAGE * STARTS WITH TEARS *

By NIKKI Boudreau, 2006



KYRGYZSTAN 2005
a village outside the city of Osh

Once an outpost along the Silk Road, Kyrgyzstan is a remote and mountainous region in Central Asia. Freed from the Soviet Union in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has since struggled economically.

Vast poverty and unemployment have sparked the renewal of bride kidnapping. This local tradition was banned under communist rule but is now a common and inexpensive way to wed.

Fatima, a 20-year-old university student, is about to be the target of a bride kidnapping. Jumankul, the man who desires her, has spotted Fatima on her way to school.



LOOK! THERE SHE IS NOW!



The surprise capture is performed by Jumankul's male relatives, none of whom Fatima has met before. Jumankul's uncle grabs Fatima and throws her into a hired taxi. Bride kidnapping is sometimes nothing more than a staged ceremony. However, some abductions, like Fatima's, can be violent and nonconsensual.

Next, Fatima is driven to Jumankul's home. Fatima's wedding is sometimes nothing more than a staged ceremony. However, some abductions, like Fatima's, can be violent and nonconsensual.

She is bombarded by his female relatives. They must convince Fatima to wear a ceremonial scarf, signifying her acceptance of the marriage. If necessary, the women will use physical force.



LET ME GO BUT I'M A STUDENT!

DEAR GIRL, WE WERE ALL TAKEN THIS WAY...

THIS TRADITION IS A PART OF US! AND YOU WILL START LOVING, EVEN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO. AS THEY SAY EVERY GOOD MARRIAGE STARTS WITH TEARS.



NO!

STAY, OR YOU WILL BE UNHAPPY.



TRUE UNHAPPINESS IS FOLLOWING OTHERS. I WILL NOT SPEND MY DAYS HERDING SHEEP. I'D BE A SHEEP TOO! I'LL BUILD MY OWN FUTURE.

fighting illegal bride kidnapping is not a top priority. Like Fatima, a growing number of women are fighting bride kidnapping. But a woman's value is still centered upon marriage and having children. Those who rebel may face shame and violence. With Kyrgyzstan's severe poverty,

“I Pledge Allegiance...”

Breann Wright

“...to the Flag, the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All.”

Amin Maalouf’s *In the Name of Identity*¹ speaks compellingly of identity and the lethal complexes it can form. Identity can leap from becoming a distinguishing characteristic, a collection of ideas and experiences and beliefs, to being the tool of cultural hatred and murder. This is not, or in any event should not be, surprising. As a society we have seen it happen many times, and participated in it ourselves. What, after all, is identity? Maalouf tells us that it is a collection of allegiances, given to any number of diverse things –

“Of course, for the great majority these factors include allegiance to a religious tradition; to a nationality – sometimes two; to a profession, an institution, or a particular social milieu. But the list is much longer than that; it is virtually unlimited. A person may feel a more or less strong attachment to a province, a village, a neighborhood, a clan, a professional team or one connected with sport, a group of friends, a union, a company, a parish, a community of people with the same passions, the sexual preferences, the same physical handicaps, or who have to deal with the same kind of pollution or other nuisance” (11).

All of these, taken together, make up the unique identity of an individual; but not all of them are taken at any one point in time. Identity is not a fixed position, but rather fluid, where, at any given point, one element or another may be uppermost. Typically, this is the one element or set of characteristics that happens to be “under attack,” or perceived as that way.

Despite this fluid changeability of one’s identity as a whole, Maalouf’s book focuses on a few more specific issues. Of all the shifting components, he chooses to write on only a few: the allegiances to one’s religion, country, language, culture, and race, with heavy emphases on language and religion. Of these, he attempts to identify the problems with each in the current (and, in his opinion, long-term) trend toward globalisation. Near the end of the book, potential solutions are brought to light. For now, however, I would like to focus on just three of the different themes of allegiance running through this particular work.

The first is that of culture. While culture is a beautiful thing and changes not only from country to country but in provinces and towns, as well, many countries – France was given as an example – fear the increasing globalisation. The United States, he holds, focuses a good deal on calming its inside struggles, but is less considerate of outside neighbours, of which include the European countries as well as the varied cultures of Asia, Africa, South America. “Our” media, language, foods, shopping malls, and attitudes intrude into their spaces; what is worse, many of their own embrace the differences with glee. To many, this is sufficient cause for fear that their own ways will be marginalised and relegated to the edge of the growing global society. And, if I may borrow the phrase, “Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. And hate leads to suffering...”

The next major component of identity that he addresses is language, as much a part of culture and identity as aught else, and creates equally strong allegiances within people, bound up as it often is with affiliations such as nationalism and religion. For instance, the author says of himself that, though he is Christian and not Islamic, “Speaking Arabic

¹ Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Penguin Books, 2000)

creates bonds between me and all those who use it every day in their prayers, though most of them by far don't know it as well as I do. If you are in central Asia and meet an elderly scholar outside a Timuride *medersa*, you need only address him in Arabic for him to feel at ease. Then he will speak to you from the heart, as he'd never risk doing in Russian or English" (17). The proposed solution to the fear of a single world language is a trilingual population: the first language will be that which one is born with, the second English or Chinese, and the third one that is chosen freely to study. Supposedly this will ensure a lack of identity crisis relating to language.

Last of the three allegiances he handles is that of religion. In his ideal globalised society, religion will no longer be seen as part of the identity. This would be a major and, in my opinion, probably impossible, step for humanity as a whole. Given the various wars, crusades, and purges based on religion in the past and present, peaceful coexistence between so very many contradictory religions is an incredible amount to ask, and humans do not typically display the last, redeeming quality that Maalouf speaks of in sufficient quantities.

The final redemption for every crisis of identity is, according to the book, reciprocity. It is more than tolerance for another's identity, being an equal exchange between two separate individuals, two separate nations or cultures. If humanity could simply learn this incredible reciprocity, Maalouf seems to imply, and if people could learn to be secure in their identities, then the many problems arising from our potentially explosive identities might find less violent resolutions. If indeed we could recognize and transfer our allegiances to a global community and a wider definition of humanity, we might find we have no more reasons to conduct warfare or to engage in diplomatic threats.

Some of Maalouf's conclusions do seem to be overly optimistic, but the goals he sets out are worth pursuing. The problems are laid out for the most part in very logical patterns, and if his final proposals are not quite satisfying, the book was not intended to solve everything – it was only designed to display a perceived crisis concerning identity. Perhaps, in giving attention to this problem, future readers can help to bring more promising solutions to light.

Assessing Amin Maalouf's *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*

Justine Keel

*In the Name of Identity*¹ offers a lengthy introduction that paves the way for an in-depth discussion of identity. The author, Amin Maalouf, is Lebanese by birth but now lives in France. His discussion addresses how aspects of our concern with identity provide an impetus toward violence. However, the in-depth discussion of identity never arrives, and I found myself surprised to have finished the book so soon only to be left with no better understanding of how to address issues raised in the book, and few new ideas to work with.

Maalouf offers virtually no solutions to the problematic questions he poses. There are several possible reasons for this. Perhaps we can tie this lack to an absence of viable solutions, in which case Maalouf might simply be resisting the temptation to preach an unfounded idealism. The optimistic tone on which the book ends, however (after having detailed the many problems arising from our preoccupation with identity), could be pegged as a surreptitious entry of false optimism. Related to this is the possibility that Maalouf is tired of detailing the difficulties associated with identity, and chose in the end to rely on an invisible "*Deus ex machina*" which arrives in the form of his unforeshadowed optimism. Still, the issues Maalouf raises concerning the connections between identity, violence and the need to belong call for careful attention, and might serve to suggest possible responses or solutions in the minds of his readers.

The subtitle seems to indicate a heavy insight into a problem of violence that arises from our concern with identity and "the need to belong." This insight into violence is not fully developed, however. Maalouf's

statements on the subject would have been more convincing had he cited some actual studies detailing some of the psychological and sociological motivations for violent acts.

Maalouf also displays a tendency to tell the reader what he will address later in the book, to mention the angle from which he will analyze a subject, and to explain why he chooses or chooses not to explore a certain idea in detail, creating a sense in the reader of hearing more than is necessary.

In the first chapter, however, Maalouf addresses the above criticisms, saying, "Sometimes what I say may seem rather simplistic. If so it's because I want to set my argument out as calmly, patiently, and fairly as possible, without resorting to jargon or unwarranted shortcuts" (9). In this sense, then, Maalouf succeeds. His voice throughout the book is one that levels with the reader, seeks to discover answers with her, rather than for her. Rather than espouse many new ideas, Maalouf refreshes the mind of the reader with a straightforward logic and simplicity that is not always adopted in academic publications. The book is written, it seems, in the mindset of a thoughtful letter to a friend rather than a professional discourse. It provides questions, not answers. Maalouf describes his intent this way: "What I am trying to prise out of these often confused considerations is not an intellectual consensus but a code of conduct, or at least a kind of safety barrier for everyone to use" (41). Despite many of the book's shortcomings, Maalouf does succeed in reminding the reader of a few important considerations concerning identity.

For instance, according to Maalouf, identity must be considered an ever-changing compilation influenced by the events in life rather than a proclamation of solidarity with

¹ Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Penguin Books, 2000)

one religious, ethnic, geographic, social, sexual, or economic group only. “In every age there have been people who considered that an individual had one overriding affiliation so much more important in every circumstance to all others that it might legitimately be called his ‘identity’” (13). A person, when she feels a portion of her identity is threatened or needs to be reaffirmed, may emphasize that one identifying trait, her religion, her gender, her country of origin. “Where people feel their faith is threatened, it is their religious affiliation that seems to reflect their whole identity. But if their mother tongue or their ethnic group is in danger, then they fight ferociously against their co-religionists” (13).

Maalouf also asserts that, rather than assuming violent actions are in the nature of one religion or ethnic group, these actions in actuality stem from a group’s sense of victimization at the hands of the majority. He mentions religion, specifically Islam, pointing out that between roughly the fifth to the fifteenth centuries, Muslims were remarkably tolerant and coexisted peacefully with Jews and Christians. Christianity of the same time, by contrast, was riddled with intolerance, violence, and an inability to coexist with other religions in peace. The key, according to Maalouf, is that for that time period Muslims did not suffer from the stigma, subjugation by the West, or threat to culture that they do today. It is the feeling of precariousness, of threat to one’s beliefs and culture that causes fanaticism and anti-modernization. Maalouf also disputes “the idea that on the one hand there’s a religion—Christianity—destined for ever to act as a vector for modernism, freedom, tolerance and democracy, and on the other hand another religion – Islam – doomed from the outset to despotism and

obscurantism” (55). Each religion, says Maalouf, is a product of the current period, situation, and society, much the same as it influences the people who adhere to it.

Unfortunately, as it damages the credibility of many of the book’s more proven or logically drawn conclusions, Maalouf on occasion makes statements that seem nothing more than passing, ill-conceived thoughts, upon which he sometimes bases further arguments. For example, he says, “Even when they [people who feel threatened or greatly wronged] commit massacres they are convinced that they are merely doing what is necessary to save the lives of their nearest and dearest” (31). How can Maalouf claim to know what the killer is convinced of? While there is the possibility that this is true in some instances, anger, insult, and retaliation surely play a more substantial portion than Maalouf may choose to acknowledge. The statement seems only a hypothesis among many possible other options. It lacks sufficient support.

Near the end of his book, Maalouf proposes, “What we need to do is enter sensibly into an age of liberty and peaceful diversity, casting aside the injustices of the past without replacing them by new ones or by other kinds of exclusion or intolerance...” (134). The need, of course, is clear, but of the means he makes no mention. Maalouf adds his hope that, should a grandson one day flip through this book, he will marvel “that in his grandfather’s day such things still needed to be said” (164). Idealistically, Maalouf’s hope could come to pass, but his book offers no insight as to *how*, practically, that would be. *In the Name of Identity* falls short of its own expectations, as many books likely do, but more than that, it falls short of the expectations it creates in the reader.

Perceptions of Parental Relationships: Tracking Sources of Pessimism and Optimism in Young Adult Attitudes About Marriage

Shannon Ramazzina

This study was inspired by recent reports of high divorce rates in the United States. According to *U.S. Divorce Magazine* (DivorceMag.com, 2002) the number of divorces granted in 1997 was 1,163,000. Some states have much higher divorce rates than others: in Nevada, for instance, the rate has skyrocketed to 9.0 divorces for every 1000 of the total population, while in Massachusetts the rate per 1000 is just 2.4. In 2002, 10% of the US population was divorced.

The point of this study is to examine attitudes towards marriage in the single and never-married population. These attitudes form a potentially important determining factor in never-married people's decision to marry and their management of future relationships. In terms of developmental psychology, early adulthood is generally the time when individuals begin to consider or contemplate the possibility of marriage. However, currently there is no broad model to help pinpoint which factors young people today consider relevant to this important life choice, much less how these factors influence their romantic relationships (Bartell, 2006).

The scope of marriage studies ranges broadly across a broad field of concerns, addressing categories such as communication, values, friends, in-laws, role conflict, religion, education level, occupation, length of marriage, careers, career satisfaction, age, number of children, household participation, sex roles, and stress. My study seeks to implement a comprehensive survey to provide an accurate identification of young people's current attitudes about marriage. Such information could possibly establish

guidelines for counseling interventions to assist young adults who are struggling with marriage decisions arrive at more reasonable attitudes and expectations regarding marital commitments and relations.

My personal pro-marriage bias leads me to hope for a decrease in the high divorce rates reported above. Marriage is a relationship generally embraced with the expectation that the relationship will be maintained for the duration of the couple's life, barring exceptional circumstances: in this respect, marriage is taken to be a life-long commitment.

While it is important for young people to understand the reasons for upholding a life-long commitment of this sort, it is also important for them to consider factors that might contribute to unrealistic expectations. Some young people enter into this binding contract for religious reasons; others marry in response to social or societal pressures, or for numerous other reasons. Crooks & Baur (1996) suggest that many people enter into marital commitments thinking marriage will satisfy their social, financial, sexual, and emotional needs. Many couples who marry also believe marriage will make them happy.

Attitudes towards marriage are complex and easily affected by numerous factors, even if we fail to understand what these factors are or how they contribute to the formation of our expectations or beliefs. Researchers have proposed a variety of key issues to consider in assessing the reasons for divorce. According to Bartell (2006), and Amato & Booth, (2001), the inheritance of family personality traits is of central importance. Risch, Riley, and Lawler (2003) found that the top three

problems contributing to divorce are *financial decisions, balancing job and family, and sexual relations*. They argue that many views of marriage come from expectations that children acquire from their family experience. If we can understand more fully the origins of these expectations, our understanding of young people's views about marriage might be enhanced.

Another plausible reason for high divorce rates is that current expectations of marriage are more demanding than those of the past. Miller, Perlman, & Brehm (2005) demonstrated that people now pursue marriage more than ever before as a pathway to fulfillment. People believe that "marriage is supposed to be play, not work; it's supposed to be exciting, not routine, and passionate, not warm" (Miller et al., 2005, p. 397). These researchers found that when we use such unrealistic expectations to evaluate ourselves and our partners, our relationships are likely to seem inadequate. Under these influences, the decision to marry is likely to have been based on an overly optimistic feeling, rather than on a realistic appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of the relationship.

Larson (1988) supports the view that the high US divorce rate can be traced to unrealistic expectations about the marriage relationship. The average qualitative assessment of marital relations has declined since 1970 (Miller et al., 2005). Larsen argues that people are expecting too much from marriage.

Popenoe and Whitehead (in Miller et al., 2005, pg. 399) discovered that the number of people who say their marriage is really happy is lower than it was twenty-five years ago, while at the same time the level of marital conflict is seen as higher (Amato et al., 2003, as cited in Miller et al., 2005, pg. 399). Marriage is now seen by married couples as less rewarding and less desirable than it used to be. This negativity may transfer across

generations: Bartell (2006) stated that there is an increase of about 70% in the risk factor of divorce if the wife has been through a parental divorce and 190% increase in risk factor if both spouses have been through a parental divorce. Based on such research, I am interested in how young people's attitudes to marriage and also their evaluations of their parents' marriages, are related to perceptions of marriage as an viable option in the respondents' own lives.

Many researchers have suggested there is a relationship between people's perspectives on other people's marriages and their own attitudes toward marriage. People's attitudes may demonstrate a variety of approaches in their expectations about marriage. Jones and Nelson (1996) have described three possible ways to categorize these expectations: *pessimistic, realistic, and idealistic*. This tripart categorization is the basis of the well-known Marriage Expectation Scale.

Researchers have claimed that idealism with respect to marriage is typically based on romantic love, and that romantic love is based on passion, which often turns out to be simply a temporary infatuation. While individuals who experience infatuation might think that this stage in their life will last forever, it rarely does. They often do not know the other person well or even necessarily like them to the degree they believe they do. Miller et al. (2005) present the triangular theory, in which long-term relationships are based on three factors: *passion, intimacy and commitment*.

When the marriage results solely from highly passionate love, the relationship is unlikely to last. Without the other two components of the triangle, the passion aspect can lead to false or inaccurate perceptions of marriage, while intimacy and commitment tend to result in a marriage decision that has more lasting power. Sternburg's study (as cited in Reis & Rusbult, 2004) points out that those with a romantic or passionate

perspective about marriage were found to be unsatisfied in marriage and likely to be pining for an ideal marriage.

The perception of marriage as “romantic”, however, is widespread: young adults also believe in romantic love even if they are children of divorce themselves (Jones & Nelson, 1996; Wallerstein, 1987). Jones and Nelson surveyed single, never-married college students who as children witnessed interparental conflict to determine their attitudes toward marriage. Their study demonstrated that students from intact homes did not differ in their expectations for marriage from those from non-intact homes. Data were collected on 244 students from intact homes and 61 students from non-intact homes. However, the non-intact home group had parents who fell into the category of either divorced, or divorced with one or both parents remarried. The fact that there were still two parents in the home may have affected the results. In contrast, another study (Kalter, 1987), found that children who view interparental conflict might later come to be pessimistic about their marriage.

Other research has found that those who are engaged to be married have higher “idealistic distortions” than those who are married or are in a long term dating relationship (Bonds-Raacke). College students sometimes have a “mythical image” of “marriage as wonderful”, as demonstrated in a survey that indicated their level of agreement with statements like, “satisfaction increases during the first year of marriage” and “sexual activity is the best predictor of relationship satisfaction” (Berk, 1998). Relationship partners often seem to concur in their beliefs about the romantic or passionate aspect of marriage, while some studies show that men score higher than women (although not to a statistically significant degree) on romantic expectations (Sprecher, 1999).

As indicated in the earlier discussion of Bartell’s study (2006), there might also be a relationship between people’s attitudes about marriage and their perception of the quality of their parent’s relationship. Research suggests that attitudes about marriage can be reliably predicted based on perceptions of divorce in the children of divorced parents. In a study conducted with a diverse sample of participants from the age of 14 to 20, 89% of whom were already dating, Kinsfogel and Grych (2004), demonstrated that witnessing parental conflict makes it more likely that children will come to think of conflict as a normal feature of relationships. The study also suggested that once these children are adults they will be prone to engage in behaviors which may entail verbal and physical aggression with their own partner. Kinsfogel and Grych concluded that behaviors observed in parents are likely to be applied in young adulthood.

In a longitudinal study of 297 parents and their married offspring, Amato and Booth (2001) determined that marital discord viewed by offspring hindered the offspring’s marital relationship and brought about marriage problems. These researchers concur that past family experience relates directly to how offspring will behave later in their marriages.

Indeed, perceptions of negative aspects of parental marriages appear to have a more significant impact on offspring than perceptions of positive aspects. Researchers generally agree that parents who have problems in their marriage relationship are likely to have children who end up with greater instability in their own marriages. Amato and Booth’s study showed that parents who in 1980 reported problems, conflict, and instability in their marriages had children who in 1997 reported that they experienced greater marital instability, less happiness, less interaction, more conflict, and more problems. The authors reason that the children

copy the parents' interaction and later act on what they witnessed in their parents' marriage.

Although this study found little support to suggest links between marital relationships and parent-child relationships, it did show that jealousy, desire for dominance, irascibility, criticism, moodiness, and lack of communication were the biggest predictors of offspring's marital success. Similarly, in a study by Boyer-Pennington (1999), students who came from intact homes were found to have better expectations of their probable future marriage compared to students from single and multiple divorce families. Bartell (2006) also found that parental divorce is a factor that puts romantic relationships during adulthood at risk. Moreover, Katler (1987) suggested that the most important factor contributing to attitudes about marriage is the offspring's perception of conflict and resentment among the offspring's parents.

Building upon the research presented above, the present study categorizes single, never-married adults as *pessimistic*, *realistic* or *idealistic*, as categorized using the Marriage Expectation Scale previously described. The point of the study is to investigate whether people in these three categories will exhibit spontaneous generation of a range of reasons for divorce. Participants are subsequently asked to rate the quality of their parents' relationship.

Method

Participants:

Participants are undergraduate college students attending a small public university in a rural community in northern California. Generally members of the young adult population, all participants are single, never married and grew up in a two parent home for the majority of their childhood. Students were recruited from the Psychology Department's online subject pool with all participation

voluntary. Some students may have received extra credit for their participation, based at the discretion of their instructors.

Design:

This study has a non-experimental, between-subjects design. The first independent variable in this study is categorization of the participants into three groups based on their scores from the Marriage Expectation Scale perspectives on marriage with three levels being Pessimistic, Realistic, or Idealistic. The other independent variable is participants' perception of the quality of their parents' relationship with each other, with the two levels being low quality or high quality. The dependent variable is participants' perceptions of their future marriage. This will be determined by using an interval scale.

Measures:

The questionnaire consists of three sections designed to measure participants' attitudes towards marriage, their perceptions of their parental figures' marital relationships, and demographic characteristics. For example, one question reads, "I think my parents were unhappy together." For all survey items participants are asked to indicate how strongly they agree with each statement on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The demographic section requires indication of age, gender, major, and class level.

Procedure:

The researcher posts surveys on the Psychology Department's online subject pool. The criteria for participation in the study are clearly defined: participants must be single, never married; they must have grown up in a two parent home for the majority of their lifetime; and be at least eighteen years of age. Students who meet the criteria and wish to participate are given a consent form and

debriefing form online. To participate, they must read and sign the consent form.

After the participants sign and send back the signed informed consent form, the researcher places the consent form in a separate designated folder. The participants are given a blank, unsigned copy of the consent form to keep for their own records. Participants are then prompted to complete the questionnaire. They are reminded that they can skip any questions that made them feel uncomfortable. They can always choose not to complete the questionnaire if, after further consideration, they decide not to participate. After the participants complete the survey and return it to the researcher, the researcher places the survey in a separate container from the consent forms. The participants then receive a debriefing form about the goals of the study, and are given references if they wish to learn more about the study. They are also instructed where they can seek help if necessary, and how to obtain access to the results of the study.

Anticipated Findings

Although this study is still in the data-collection stage, it appears probable that those participants categorized as pessimistic will have more negative attitudes towards

marriage than those categorized as realistic and idealistic. Further, based on what other research studies suggest, participants who believe that the quality of their parents' relationship was fair or good are likely to have more positive attitudes towards marriage, while participants who come from families with perceived low quality parental relationships are predicted to have more negative attitudes toward marriage.

Additionally, it is likely that perceptions of parental relationships will have a greater impact on those with a pessimistic perspective, because perceptions of a good quality parental relationship might overturn their pessimism, whereas those with a more idealist and realistic attitude may not be as affected by variation in perception of parental relationship quality.

It is hoped that these results will confirm other studies regarding factors affecting young adult attitudes about marriage. By determining the key factors affecting attitudes about marriage, studies of this sort could be used to help counselors design guidance programs grounded on realistic rather than idealized expectations for those engaging in a marriage commitment.

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Connections Between Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement Among Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Students

Arelí Dohner-Chávez

Abstract

This study used a correlational design to investigate how parental involvement and ethnicity (Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic) is related to the academic achievement (measured by grade point average) of college students. Participants included 48 Hispanic and 40 non-Hispanic college students who were asked about parental involvement received during their primary education. A 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of ethnicity on academic achievement ($F = 6.88$; $p < .05$), in that non-Hispanics had a higher mean GPA than Hispanic college students. However, there was not a significant main effect of parental involvement ($F = .00$; $p = .996$) and no significant interaction between parental involvement and ethnicity ($F = .69$; $p = .41$).

We live in a competitive and capitalist world in which educational attainment increases the probability of obtaining well-paying employment, ultimately leading to a higher standard of living. Students who demonstrate high academic achievement, measured by their grade point average (GPA), are more likely to graduate from college and those who graduate from college are more likely to achieve their career goal. According to Gordon-Rouse and Austin (2002), high school student participants who had a GPA greater than 2.75 were considered to be high achievers and typically demonstrated higher motivation in their education than those with lower GPAs. Rouse and Austin also suggested that those with a high GPA were more likely to prepare themselves for college and therefore have higher expectations to succeed academically. However, not all students perform well in college: the academic achievement of a student is impacted by many factors, including their ethnicity and the influence of parental involvement during their primary education.

Many studies have compared students of different ethnic backgrounds and have found that individuals of Hispanic origin continue to have the lowest educational attainment (Alva & Padilla, 1995; Mirande & Enriquez, 1979). The academic progress of Hispanic students continues to remain far behind the other

ethnic groups in many different aspects (Alva & Padilla). One study found one of these aspects to be that Hispanic students are far less likely to graduate from high school when compared to other ethnicities (Mirande & Enriquez). Alva and Padilla also found that there are many socio-cultural variables that impact a Hispanic student's ability to succeed academically such as the struggle for acculturation, language barriers, and lack of role models in the school system that reflect their own ethnicity. Research demonstrates that these are only a few obstacles that may increase the difficulty of obtaining academic achievement among Hispanic students.

Regardless of ethnicity, parental involvement in a child's education has a definite impact on the child's level of academic success. Past research indicates that active parental involvement in education is important because it is positively related to a child's self-expectations for academic success (Ibañez, Kupermine, Jurkovic & Perilla, 2004). Across all ethnicities, studies have demonstrated that parental monitoring leads to higher academic achievement, if only because parental attention helps children remain focused on school (Plunkett & Bamaca-Gomez, 2003). The few studies that have looked at parental involvement as a factor of academic achievement demonstrate that "parent involvement [is] positively

related to expectations and importance of schooling” and that by having a positive outlook toward education, a student is more likely to succeed (Ibañez et al, 2004).

Though parental involvement is clearly important for any ethnicity to succeed academically, the dynamics facing Hispanic students suggest the need for a special emphasis on parental involvement. Such involvement is especially important if Hispanic children are to overcome cultural and language challenges to their educational attainment. However, many Hispanic parents are recent immigrants with very little formal schooling and have only low-level English skills. These parents are typically unfamiliar with the American school systems and may lack the confidence to help with schoolwork (Plunkett & Bamaca-Gomez, 2003). In addition, as a population, Hispanics tend to have a lower socio-economic status (Mirande & Enriquez, 1979). The implication of this for Hispanic children is not insignificant, for Hispanic parents who must work long hours to make ends meet might not have enough surplus time or energy to devote to their children’s education. Nevertheless, despite language barriers and long work hours, these parents often demonstrate involvement by recognizing the importance of school through actions such as making sure homework is completed. Hispanic students need the extra support of high parental involvement in their education in order to persevere and excel academically.

In organizing the current study, I set out to examine this relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement amongst Hispanic and non-Hispanic students. Based on previous research, my initial hypothesis was that Hispanic students in general would demonstrate lower academic achievement in comparison to non-Hispanic students. My second hypothesis was that college students with high parental involvement in their primary education would

demonstrate higher academic achievement in college than those with low parental involvement. By implication, I was able to predict that parental involvement would have a larger impact on academic achievement for Hispanic students than it would have for non-Hispanic students. The aim of this preliminary study was to work with a group to research the relationship between parental involvement and ethnicity among college students. My long-term plan is to extend this research by making adjustments to the survey and comparing responses from college students to responses from high school students.

Method

Participants

Participants were 40 non-Hispanic and 48 Hispanic students over the age of 18 years ($M = 21.86$, $SD = 5.79$) from a small public university in a rural area of central California. There were 65 female and 23 male participants, which reflects the overall gender ratio of that university. Survey participants were solicited by researchers who visited classes. Researchers also stood in the central quad on campus and asked students if they wanted to participate in a study. In addition, participants were recruited through an on-line subject pool. Participation was on a volunteer basis, and the participants were free to choose the time slot that best fit their schedule. At the discretion of their instructors, some students received extra credit for their participation.

Design

This study utilized a correlational, between-subjects design. The two independent variables were ethnicity and parental involvement. The two levels for ethnicity consisted of “Hispanic” and “non-Hispanic,” and parental involvement was divided into “high” and “low” involvement. “Parental involvement” was operationally defined to be the extent to which parents were attentive and supportive of their child’s primary education.

The dependent variable of this study was academic achievement, as measured by the student's current grade point average (GPA).

Measures

For the purposes of this study, the researchers created a questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section consisted of one question asking participants to indicate their primary reason for seeking a college degree, with options such as "to please my parents", "to get a good job" and "to feel better about myself." The second section consisted of 16 parental involvement items ($\alpha = .83$), such as "my parents helped me develop good study habits", "my parents checked to see if I had homework", and "I believe my parents' encouragement helped me stay focused on my education". Participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strong agree). The scores from the questionnaire ranged from 21-65 with a median split of 50, so the scores ranging from 21-50 were categorized as "low parental involvement" and scores ranging from 51-65 were categorized as "high parental involvement." The final section contained demographic questions about age, ethnicity, and GPA.

Procedure

Researchers entered classrooms, gave a brief overview of the project, and asked if students would like to participate. Those who did not wish to participate left the classroom for a short break. Students who used the on-line subject pool were asked to come to a specific room at a designated time. Those students who wished to participate were presented with an informed consent sheet. The researchers then reviewed this sheet orally and answered any questions that were asked by participants. Once the participant chose to continue, he or she signed one copy of the form and returned it to the researcher. A

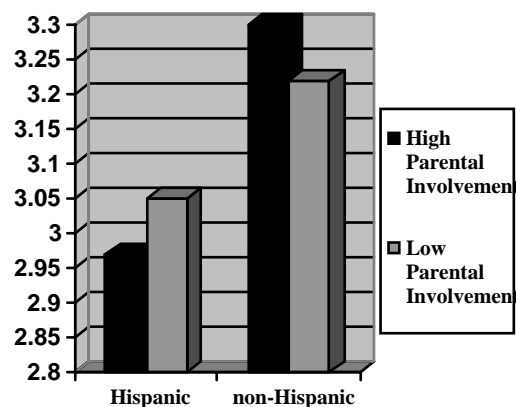
second copy was also provided to the participant for their records.

Researchers also stood in the campus central quad and asked students who passed by if they wanted to participate in a study. Researchers gave a brief overview of the project to those who expressed interest in participating and if they agreed to participate in the study, they were given an informed consent form to sign and a copy for their records. Participants were encouraged to sit down and complete the questionnaire with sufficient space between each other to complete it privately. Those who did not wish to participate were not given a questionnaire.

All participants were given the questionnaire and asked to choose the response that most applied to them or to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a statement. After completing the questionnaire and returning it to the researchers, all participants were given a debriefing form that summarized the goals of the study, provided information on how to learn about the results of the study, and provided references for further reading. All students were also thanked for their participation.

Results

Figure 1 presents academic achievement (utilizing mean GPA) for Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in relation to high and low parental involvement:



Looking at the pattern of results displayed in Figure 1, it appears that Hispanic students had lower academic achievement than non-Hispanic students. The degree to which academic achievement was affected by parental involvement, however, also appears to depend on the ethnicity of the participant. Specifically, for Hispanic students, low parental involvement correlated better with higher academic achievement than did high parental involvement; however, for non-Hispanic students, high parental involvement correlated with a higher level of academic achievement than was attained by students indicating low levels of parental involvement.

To test these apparent effects, I analyzed the data using a 2×2 , between subjects univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a significant main effect of participant's ethnicity on their academic achievement, such that the mean GPA was significantly higher for non-Hispanic students ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .44$) than it was for Hispanic students ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .42$), regardless of parental involvement in their primary education: $F(1,77) = 6.88$, $MSE = 1.26$, $p < .05$. On the other hand, the main effect of parental involvement was not statistically significant: $F(1, 77) = .00$, $MSE = .00$, $p = .996$, with the mean GPA for low parental involvement ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .43$) being only slightly higher than it was for high parental involvement ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .45$). In addition, the interaction between ethnicity and parental involvement was not statistically significant: $F(1, 77) = .69$, $MSE = .13$, $p = .41$. The individual condition means were as follows: non-Hispanic students with high parental involvement ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .43$) scored the highest mean GPA. The second highest group comprised non-Hispanic students with low parental involvement ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .46$). The third highest group comprised Hispanic students with low parental involvement ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .41$). Somewhat surprisingly, the lowest scoring

group comprised Hispanic students with high parental involvement ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .42$).

Discussion

The results supported my initial hypothesis that non-Hispanic students would have significantly higher academic achievement than Hispanic students. However, the second hypothesis was not supported by the data, as parental involvement did not appear to have a significant effect on academic achievement. Nevertheless, among non-Hispanic students, those with a high level of parental involvement scored the highest mean GPA overall. The data also failed to support my third hypothesis, that parental involvement would have a larger impact on academic achievement for Hispanic students than for non-Hispanic students.

Similar to other studies (Alva & Padilla, 1995; Mirande & Enriquez, 1979), the data indicated that Hispanic college students are struggling academically to a greater degree than non-Hispanic students. Hispanic students continue to remain behind other ethnic groups in all levels of education (Alva & Padilla, 1995). Although few studies have researched the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, the study conducted by Plunkett & Bamaca-Gomez in 2003 indicated a positive correlation between the two variables; however, this study did not produce conclusive data to support or refute these findings.

One reason why parental involvement may not have provided a significant effect is because the sample was limited to only college students. Although the reliability analysis showed high variability among the questionnaire responses, there was clearly a consistent positive skew in most items toward high parental involvement. This indicates that most people in college have received some type of parental involvement during their primary education. My study might have yielded more interesting results if the survey

had included a question about the socio-economic status of participants. This factor could have impacted the degree of parental involvement during primary education. Parents with low socio/economic status and lower levels of educational attainment may have engaged in lower levels of involvement in their children's education. Additionally, some Hispanic respondents may have interpreted "attentive and supportive" differently from others.

A statistically significant result in parental involvement might be achieved if high school students were surveyed instead of college students. Future research of high school students would provide a wider spectrum of students with differing levels of parental involvement, as well as a wider range of GPAs. More significantly, a survey directed to this group would identify students who are not planning or qualified to go to college. Furthermore, research directed at high school students would gain access to students who

are attending school not by choice but because they are required to be there.

In light of the accumulation of findings demonstrating that Hispanic students are struggling academically, it should be clear that changes will need to occur if we are serious about wanting to improve the level of educational attainment and academic achievement among Hispanic students. Roughly 32.4% of California's population is Hispanic (Johnson, 2002). The fact that the largest ethnic minority group in California is struggling academically impacts society as a whole. This study is important because it provides useful information not only to Hispanic students and parents but to teachers and academic counselors as well. By combining the efforts of the educational system with efforts to improve the levels of parental involvement in their children's education, we can work together to improve the likelihood of academic achievement among all students.

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Questionnaire

The following question asks you about your current college education (check the one that most applies to you).

1. Which of the following would you say is the primary reason that you want to graduate from college? (Please choose only one response).

- To please my parents
- To get a good job
- To make more money
- To feel better about myself
- To help my parents financially
- To prove to others that I can do it

Please circle a response that indicates how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement below.

The following 23 items ask you to think about your childhood. When reading the items, please think about when you were growing up (kindergarten through high school). The term “parents” refers to your parents or other guardians.

2. My parents helped me develop good study habits.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. My parents encouraged me to get good grades.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. My parents were strict when it came to school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. My parents checked to see if I had homework.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1 2 3 4 5

6. My parents attended parent-teacher conferences.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

7. My parents punished me (e.g., took away my TV privileges) if I received bad grades.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

8. My parents attended events like “Back to School” nights.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

9. My parent(s) volunteered in my class.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

10. My parents did not notice when I received good grades.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

11. My parents demonstrated support for my extracurricular activities.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

12. My parents volunteered to help with my extracurricular activities (e.g., coach baseball team).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Victim Blaming

Elizabeth Conaway

We are long past a time when female rape victims could be interrogated on the stand about what they were wearing at the time of a rape, which was once court admissible evidence. But we have not yet reached the point where a female rape victim is insulated from judgments of blame: not in the court system, should she choose to prosecute her assailant; not amongst her peers, should she disclose her experience; and not in her treatment experience, should she choose to seek assistance.

This research project examines societal factors which, I will argue, contribute to a prevalent tendency in our society to blame rape victims. My study focuses on how people are educated about rape, as well as on the role of their gender and education level, their academic field of study, and other things they choose to disclose in an interview related to factors that might affect their likelihood to blame a victim. My aim is to determine the extent to which attributes commonly associated with rape victims – e.g., drug use, drinking, reputation, location, and seductive behavior or clothing – serve to motivate a victim-blaming attitude.

The cause of victim-blaming is surely riddled in the culture. Gender and sexual stereotypes and myths dominate how we perceive sexual activity. Lack of viable education and resources impede the necessary growth of individuals and inhibit transitions in societal norms and attitudes. My intention with this study is to investigate why people blame victims of rape (which I define to be a crime in which the victim had no responsibility). Related to this are questions about how people are educated on the matter of rape, and about any factors that might influence the formation of attitudes about rape in a person who does *not* show a tendency to blame rape victims.

My project aims to identify ways in which one's attitudes towards sexual coercion are socially influenced. I will do this by evaluating responses to a questionnaire to gauge participant attitudes toward rape, rape victims, and rape perpetrators, and responses to interviews with CSU Stanislaus students, through which I was able to engage in conversations about their feelings toward rape and fault, especially as it varies with attributes associated with the victim. The victim attributes I examined include age, race, behaviors (e.g., attire, flirting, drinking or drug use), and profession (e.g., whether they are exotic dancers or in the sex industry).

My approach has been to develop and conduct a survey to gather information relating to the formation of attitudes about rape and rape victims. I am collecting relevant demographic information, and looking to see which factors attributed to a rape victim, perpetrator or society are likely to be viewed as contributing to the frequency of rape.

My survey also poses a series of true-false questions which collectively serve to gauge a participant's understanding of laws pertaining to rape. Survey participants are given the opportunity to indicate what they think could stop rape from occurring in society, and to identify what they consider to be the primary intention in rape. I pose a frequency question to identify opinions on why accusations of rape are made, and another to gauge how often participants believe false accusations are made. I also ask my survey participants to indicate how they learned about rape (the questionnaire is attached).

I am also conducting interviews involving ten scenarios and the following questions: *Did a rape occur? Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred? Who is responsible for the outcome of the situation? What could have changed the outcome of this*

situation? This interview also includes a section of demographic questions, and an opportunity for participants to divulge personal experiences they feel might have contributed to their perceptions of rape, as well as an opportunity for them to discuss media and societal influences. Participants come from two different groups. The first are CSU Stanislaus students over the age of eighteen who either volunteered to participate or participated through one of their classes. The second is a Spring 2007 cohort of the Haven Women Center's volunteer and staff-training program, whom I will survey and interview before and after a seventy-two hour training course to gauge how the course impacts their views on rape. After calculating, quantifying, and evaluating the results of the surveys and interviews, I plan to conduct some content analysis of television programs, movies, educational materials, and news stories to evaluate rape education tools and their influence on victim blaming.

There are several potential limitations to my research. One possible limitation concerns the sensitive nature of the material and its impact on the researcher and participant relationship. My hope is that participants will feel comfortable enough in my research environment to openly disclose personal experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and biases towards rape. Another possible limitation concerns the pitfalls of both quantitative and qualitative research, though I will endeavor to achieve a balance. Quantitative research is beneficial in that it lends itself to numeric precision, organization, and analysis, but is limited in the sense that a participant is limited to the proposed questions and suggested responses. Qualitative research allows participants to respond to stimuli openly rather than choosing predetermined answers, but privileges our ability to communicate over our possession of information. I shall use both a questionnaire and an interview in an attempt to gain

valuable information through the use of both forms of research.

Similar studies have been conducted in the past, employing a variety of methodologies, instruments, and approaches for analyzing individuals' tendency to blame rape victims. However, I see a need for expanded and continuous research for several reasons. One, the research conducted thus far is primarily centered on the psychological explanations for victim blame, rather than on the socio-cultural causes. Second, the research overwhelmingly uses only quantitative data, and I believe that it is more compelling to allow participants to speak from their own paradigm and experiences rather than to impose options and answers on them. And, third, though a variety of studies have been conducted throughout the United States (one was even conducted in 2000 at CSU Stanislaus), this issue is both volatile and evolving. I am curious to examine the ways in which my findings about local students and rape crisis advocates will compare with similar studies.

One study closely linked to mine was conducted in 2000 by Pamela Kyles at CSU Stanislaus. She presented her results in her MA thesis, entitled *Attribution of Fault in a Rape*. In her study, Kyles examined three independent variables and their effect on attributing fault to a victim of rape. Her independent variables were the gender and the education level of the survey participant and the way in which the victim of the rape was dressed. She surveyed 126 students and professors from CSU Stanislaus. In her discussion, she explained that other studies echoed her finding that women who were dressed provocatively were more likely to have fault associated with them for crimes committed against them, including rape and robbery. Many other similar studies have been conducted, including ones that gauge a participant's likelihood to victim blame paralleled with some other factor, such as

their religious beliefs (Writes), their views and values about marriage (Whatley, 2005), whether they have ever been victimized (Mason and Riger), their sexuality and the sexuality of the victim (Wakelin and Long 2003), and their likelihood of adhering to rape myths (Frese, Megias, Moya, 2004).

Another interesting study was presented in *The Politics of Rape: The Victim's Perspective* (Russell 1975). This studied analyzed interviews conducted with women who were rape survivors. The interview consisted of their story, as told to the interviewer, followed by a response to questions probing for whether victims felt any blame, responsibility or fault in their victimization. Their response to that question opened the conversation to factors that may have influenced their self-blame and feelings of responsibility. Most victims who blamed themselves did so because of behaviors they had chosen to engage in prior to being victimized, including hitchhiking, drug use, the company they chose to be in, and their location. Those who blamed themselves also identified factors in their socialization and victimization that contributed to their feelings of responsibility. These factors included mis-education about rape, adherence to rape myths, and blame addressed to them by their support people.

Victim blaming has its roots in the advent of American history, was present in the England from which American culture developed, and has had a place in all Western and non-Western societies. There have been many stigmas attached to the rape victim, and many inequities that accompany the victimization of rape. Culture, religion, and sexuality contribute to the way in which a victim is viewed and treated. The history of the treatment of the victim is parallel to the history of the "false accuser" phenomenon, which has its beginnings in the 17th century. In one such episode, Margarey Evans, a young woman who was returning home

through the woods from a Midsummer's Festival, was raped by two men, and when she went to report the crime, she faced hostility from the law enforcement and courts, who were heavily influenced by the perpetrators themselves.

With this case of disbelief and distrust, a precedent was set in the arena of sexual assault advocacy, often calling on the prosecution to pay special attention to the victim, with a generalized attitude that the victim could be lying or exhibiting suspicious intentions in reporting a rape. The result was that a rape victim's intentions and motives could be questioned just as rigorously as those of the alleged perpetrator. From this case came a warning from a judge that continued to be read to jurors in rape trials well into the 1970s (when the feminist movement finally succeeded in challenging its legitimacy):

"Rape is a most detestable crime, and therefore ought severely and impartially to be punished with death; but it must be remembered that it is an accusation easy to be made, hard to be proved, but harder to be defended by the party accused, though innocent" (Block 11).

Setting up rape trials in this manner indicated from the beginning that it was the accuser who was on trial, she was doubted from the beginning and forced to first prove her innocence, and then prove the guilt of the one she has accused. Through the fierce advocacy of anti-violence activism and feminist reform in the 1960s and 1970s, this warning was removed from the courtroom.

Several other ideological frameworks have contributed to victim blaming. In the early 20th century, Freud coined the terms 'female hysteria' and 'pathological liar' in his practice of psychoanalysis (Sanday, 1996, 122-123). These terms, in addition to the work of Freud, had negative consequences for women's sexuality, and especially for female rape victims, as the terms worked their way into courts to describe women deemed

uncontrollable or incapable of telling the truth. Following Freud's developments came the advent of sexology and sexual Darwinism. Havelock Ellis and Krafft-Ebing developed a theory that coincided with Darwin's notion of sexual selection. Their theory asserted that men pursue women whom they believe would make good mates, and both partners put forth effort to express their desire to mate with each other. Men were said to do this by means of aggressive pursuit and women were said to contribute by means of avoiding and resisting sex, which Havelock Ellis and Krafft-Ebing interpreted as weeding out their mates by determining which ones were willing to struggle to be their mate. The sexual selection theory was dangerous to rape victims who argued that they had resisted the rape, for the theory claimed that resistance was just a part of the natural game (Sanday, 1996, 123-124).

Many cultural elements shape how ideologically-based prejudice toward victims develops. My research is intended to gauge how participants have been informed on the issue of rape and should serve to correlate different forms of educational frameworks with different attitudes and prejudices. The identification of a participant's source of rape education is crucial to understanding victim blaming because many ideas prejudicial to rape victims continue to be propagated.

My hypothesis is that those people who learned about rape from their families and religious institutions will be the most likely to victim blame because research shows these agents of socialization attribute considerable responsibility to the individual rather than societal structures when it comes to issues of sexual violence. I hypothesize that participants who receive their education from Sexual Assault or Rape Crisis agencies are better educated on rape and less likely to blame victims. Though my research will not necessarily delve into this question, it would be very interesting to examine the philosophy and pedagogical tools of the agencies from

which participants learned about rape issues and to compare these with their resulting attitudes and ideas about rape, as not all sexual assault agencies operate under identical philosophies.

There are two key psychological explanations for why people tend to blame rape victims. The first is the Invulnerability theory (André and Velazquez, 1990). This theory asserts that people would like to believe they are safe from harmful and heinous acts against them. Therefore, they formulate ideas of what someone in displeasing circumstances, such as a rape victim, must have done to invite the rape. Creating ideas of "victim fault" contributes to a sense of invulnerability because people tend to feel they can identify behaviors that would make them vulnerable, and can practice prevention by simply avoiding these attributes. People who subscribe to the Invulnerability Theory are likely to be harsh in their accusations of blame and fault because it is crucial to this framework that victims must have done something to make them vulnerable. Parallel to Invulnerability theory is the Just World theory, which asserts that the world is surely a just place, and therefore, people reap what they sow. If something bad happens to someone, they must have exhibited some fault to precipitate the crisis.

A multitude of sociocultural factors influence the reasons for perceptions of rape and rape victims. One factor is media portrayal. Research indicates that most rapes portrayed in television or movie scenarios are perpetrated by strangers, even though only a very small fraction of actual rapes fall into this category. This clearly skews the way in which people view the crime of rape. Television and movie portrayals also tend to highlight the supposed mistakes or flaws of the victims in order to portray the story as avoidable fantasy rather than to present an accurate picture. The aim of the content

analysis portion of my research is to identify the content of portrayals of rape in news stories, television shows and movies, and to compare this focus to the reality of rape crimes. This comparison should create a sense of why perceptions about rape are so easily skewed from the reality of the crime, and why learning about rape through such means can contribute to a person's development of victim-blaming tendencies. Other factors include various forms of socialization, including the influence of elementary and secondary education, families, and religious institutions. The interview portion of my research should be central to exploring the ways in which individuals are socialized and educated concerning rape and how this might contribute to victim-blaming biases, beliefs and attitudes.

The notion of shifting the blame from the rape victim to the perpetrator is a product of the advocacy and determination of the

feminist movement initiated in the 1960s. In my research concerning how these revolutionary ideas have evolved, become embedded in, and affected rape culture, several crucial matters are at stake. For one thing, I risk discovering that the idea of a blame-free victim advocated by the feminists of the 1960s is a trend that subsided with the conclusion of the second wave of feminist action. I may find through my research that only fragments of notions propagated by the initial feminist push for rape law reform and victim services remain in place, or worse yet, are completely gone. Another risk is the continuing threat to the existence of these ideas as they compete with other theories of sexuality and victimization, such as sexual Darwinism. Also at stake is the threatening conclusion that even the service providers at the local rape crisis center might not embody the ideals of the philosophy on which their practice stands.

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Survey Regarding Rape Knowledge and Beliefs

Please answer the following survey questions to the best of your ability to assist my research project regarding CSU Stanislaus student beliefs and knowledge about rape. Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. Your responses will not be subject to inappropriate disclosure. This survey is for research purposes only. Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me at elizabethconaway@yahoo.com or my research mentor at rmacdonald@csustan.edu.

Demographics:

Age: _____

Gender: (Circle one) Female Male Androgynous Other Declined to State

Marital Status: (Circle One) Single Married Divorced Widowed Separated
Domestic Partnership

Class Standing: (Circle One) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate Other

Are you involved in a Sorority or Fraternity? (Circle One) Yes No

Are you involved in other clubs or organizations? Yes (Answer next question)
No (Skip next question)

If yes, what is the nature of the clubs or organizations? Circle all that apply:

Political Social Service Academic Religious

Major _____

Concentration _____ (Write none if you do not have one)

Minor _____ (Write none if you do not have one)

Beliefs about Sexual Assault

Which of the following, if any, do you believe contributes to the frequency of rape in the United States? (Place an X next to all that apply)

Victim Behavior:

Drinking

Drug Use

Seduction

Clothing Style

Attractiveness

Location (being in dangerous areas)

Solitude (being alone)

Demeanor (if the victim appears soft or passive)

Company (being with somebody she knows wants to have sex with her)

Naiveté

Flirtatiousness

Engaging in foreplay

Other (identify all you can think of)

Perpetrator Behavior:

- Drinking
- Drug Use
- Violent Tendencies
- Sexual Desire
- Sexual Need
- Other (identify all you can think of)

Societal Factors:

- Gender Socialization
- Lack of education
- Lack of prosecution for perpetrators
- Income Disparity
- Lack of education for victims
- Lack of effective treatment for perpetrators
- Societal tendencies toward war and conflict
- Perpetrators ability to get away with it
- Other (identify all you can think of):

Circle whether each statement is true or false:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| It is possible for a man to rape his wife | True / False |
| It is possible for a prostitute to be raped | True / False |
| A drunk person can consent to sex | True / False |
| A mentally retarded person can consent to sex | True / False |
| If a woman does not try to fight him off,
then it is ok for a man to have sex with her. | True / False |

Which of the following, if any, do you believe might stop rape from occurring?

(Place an X next to all that apply)

- If women stopped wearing seductive clothing
- If women did not get drunk in public or at parties
- If women did not walk home alone
- If women were not out late at night
- If society at large were more educated on the issue of rape
- If fewer violent stimuli were present in our media culture
- If men chose not to rape
- If men did not get drunk
- If men had their needs satisfied more readily by willing women
- Other (list all relevant factors):

The most common primary intention behind rape is:

- Sexual Gratification
- Control/ Dominance
- Recreation
- Other
- Rebellion from norms
- To satisfy uncontrollable urges

Circle (n) never/ (s) sometimes/ (u) undecided/ (o) often/ or (a) always/:

Women invite rape	n/s/u/o/a
Women provoke rape	n/s/u/o/a
Rape is justified	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if they are angry	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if they feel guilty for having sex with them	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if they have cheated on a significant other	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if they become pregnant	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if they feel their reputation will be damaged	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if the man no longer wants to have sex with them	n/s/u/o/a
Women accuse men of rape if they do not want to admit they are a prostitute	n/s/u/o/a
Rape is deserved	n/s/u/o/a
Rape is requested	n/s/u/o/a

What percentage of complaints do you believe involve a false accusation of rape?

- 0- 10%
- 11-20%
- 21-30%
- 31- 40%
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71-80
- 81-90
- 91-100

By what means were you educated about rape? Put an X next to all that apply:

- Rape Crisis Center or Sexual Assault agency
- School- elementary education
- School- secondary education
- Family
- Religious Institution
- Internet
- Research Materials
- Friends or Peers
- Television
- Movies
- Other (specify)

Further Comments: Since I cannot personally speak with each of you, please feel free to write me a note reflecting any thoughts you might have about rape or related issues.

Rape Knowledge and Beliefs (Interview Q's)

This interview is for research purposes only. Your responses shall remain anonymous. If you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop the interview at anytime, you can let me know by saying stop. I will end the interview immediately. If you decide you do not wish for your responses to be included in my research paper, please contact me immediately via email: elizabethconaway@yahoo.com

Have the following influenced your beliefs about or knowledge of rape:

Movies? If yes, which movies, and how?

Music? If yes, what music and how?

By what means were you educated on rape?

Do you believe that rape is a problem in our society?

What do you believe contributes to the frequency of rape in our society?

I am going to read several scenarios and then ask you for your opinions and insight on what occurred and who is responsible. I will also give you a copy of the questions.

1. A married couple has been fighting for the last several months. They have stopped having sex. One day, the husband insists that his wife have sex with him. She refuses and he threatens to kick her out of the house if she does not have sex with him. At that point, she complies.

A. Did a rape occur?

B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?

C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?

D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

2. A prostitute has several regular customers and one of them approaches her on the street one night. She does not feel like working and refuses him service, but she does accept a ride across town. Before taking her to her destination, he pulls the car over and forces her to have sex with him. He then drives her the rest of the way to her destination and gives her \$40, the amount that she usually charges him. She accepts the money.

A. Did a rape occur?

B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?

C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?

D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

3. A woman dresses up in very sexy attire to go to a frat party. Once there, she consumes several drinks very quickly and becomes intoxicated. A man who she has been sleeping with casually approaches her and, after flirting with her, leads her into a room where he has sex with her.

A. Did a rape occur?

B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?

C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?

D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

4. A woman works at a convenient store in an urban area. She gets off work at 2 am one morning, and walks through an alley on her way home. She is held at knife point by a man who forces her to have sex with him.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

5. Jill, a 25 year old woman with mental retardation, is under the care of her mother due to her disability. Her male nurse finds her very attractive and seeks her permission to have sex with her. She says yes, so they do.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

6. An 18 year old college student is failing one of her required classes. The instructor propositions her with the arrangement that if she has sex with him, he will gladly pass her.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

7. A woman works at a strip club that has a reputation for being a pick up location for prostitutes as well as exotic dancing. A woman is hanging out in the back after she dances, at a location that is known to be a pick-up point. A man approaches her, offers her money, and requests sex from her. She refuses. He then demands that she have sex with him, or he will expose the prostitution to Law Enforcement. Many of her friends are involved with the prostitution. She still refuses, so he threatens her with a weapon and forces her to have sex with him.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

8. A woman has a male friend over for dinner and a movie with herself and her 6 year old child. The child falls asleep on the living room floor. The man begins to make advances at the woman by putting his arm around her and kissing her. She whispers for him to stop, and he continues to make advances. She keeps whispering for him to stop because she does not want to wake or scare her sleeping child. He forces her to have sex with him.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

9. A gay man is hanging out at a popular local bar. He is usually not afraid to share his sexual orientation if asked, but the atmosphere at this bar is making him a little uncomfortable. He does end up sharing his orientation with a woman who hits on him. Within a few minutes, many of the patrons at the bar know. He leaves right then, but is followed out to his car by a man who proceeds to have sex with him despite his pleas for it to stop.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

10. A woman goes to a fraternity party and finds herself incredibly intoxicated after only one drink. She then becomes sluggish, and passes out on the floor, where she wakes up the next morning to find that her pants are ripped, her underwear is missing, and she has bruises on her thighs.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

11. A man has recently had oral surgery and is taking a prescribed drug for the pain. This alleviates his pain, but he is unable to speak coherently, hold a conversation, or make rational decisions while he is on it. One night, after he has taken the painkiller, his wife has sex with him.

- A. Did a rape occur?
- B. Why or why not? What factors determined whether a rape occurred?
- C. Who is responsible for the outcome of this situation?
- D. What could have been changed in this situation in order to change the outcome?

Demographics:

- 1. Age
- 2. Major
- 3. Year in school
- 4. Gender
- 5. Marital status
- 6. Please share any personal experiences that you have had that you believe contribute to your attitudes toward rape, victims, and perpetrators
- 7. Do you think that a person's attitudes toward rape, rape victims, and perpetrators are affected if they know someone who has been raped?
- 8. Do you think that a person's attitudes toward rape, rape victims, and perpetrators are affected by whether or not they have ever been raped?

Content Analysis

Name of Program or Headline of Story:

Source: TV Show Movie Magazine Article Newspaper TV News Story

Date of Source: ___/___/___

Victim Demographics (if mentioned):

Age: ___

Sex: ___

Behaviors exhibited or described:

Drinking

Drug use

Prostitution

Location

Naiveté

Blame Association: Yes / No

How?

Perpetrator:

Age: ___

Sex: ___

Behaviors Exhibited:

Drinking

Drug use

Prostitution

Location

Naiveté

Blame Association: Yes / No

How?

Language Use:

Headline or sound bite: Passive / Assertive

Phrases describing the Victim:

Phrases describing the Perpetrator:

Her Kingdom for a Life: The Forgotten Works Of California's First Poet-Laureate, Ina Coolbrith

Matthew Moberly

*"There, little girl, there is California! There is your kingdom!"
-Jim Beckwourth to Coolbrith*

Niece of Joseph Smith, patriarch of the Mormon faith, Ina Coolbrith was a pioneer, poet, librarian, editor of the *Overland Monthly*, and literary mentor to distinguished writers of her day. She was also California's first Poet Laureate. Still, this once celebrated figure in the California literary tradition has faded from the limelight. Her collections of poetry, appearing between 1881 and 1929 (a year after her death) have become relics of the past, and her poems are now virtually forgotten. Given that Coolbrith played an influential part in the development of San Francisco's literary scene, I find it intriguing that her work has fallen through the cracks and goes unnoticed today. My goal in this project is to familiarize myself with the life and works of Ina Coolbrith in order to rightfully place her within the context of American literature. Through a critical reading of her biography and three collections of poetry, I hope to revive awareness and appreciation of California's first Poet Laureate. In the long run, I hope to compile a thematic collection of Coolbrith's poetry to share with readers of the 21st century.

The title of Poet Laureate has traditionally been bestowed on esteemed poets to honor their work and contributions to the genre of poetry. In China, the Emperor selected court poets to read at ceremonious occasions, and England has a long history of appointing world-renowned British poets such as Wordsworth and Browning to the position of Poet Laureate. The United States has adopted a similar practice, officially calling our country's crowned poet "The Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress." Yet, before Congress began

acclaiming distinguished poets, California became the first independent state to appoint a Poet Laureate. What do we know about the first poet to earn this distinction, and what was it about her accomplishments that warranted the designation of such a prestigious title? Through a close reading of the biography and published poems of Ina Donna Coolbrith, I hope to reveal why she was selected as the first person in California (and the United States) to hold the title of Poet Laureate, and how audiences might relate to her work today.

Coolbrith's poems were first published in 1881, and continued to appear in print in literary magazines up through the turn of the century. A posthumous collection of poems appeared a year after her death, in 1929. But her work and accomplishments were essentially forgotten in the 20th century until a short revival in the 1970s. There are only a handful of books discussing Coolbrith and her work, and no more than a dozen academic journal articles offering studies of her poetry. I was expecting to find more critical analysis of a poet whose work and life were influential enough to earn her the designation as first Poet Laureate of California. Biographers Josephine DeWitt Rhodelhamel and Raymund Francis Wood took up the task of writing the only biography published on her life in 1973, and this is considered to be the authoritative text to consult when studying Coolbrith's life.

Her poetry speaks for itself, but Coolbrith has an equally fascinating life story. Ina Coolbrith's family name was Josephine D. Smith. As a young child of 10, Josephine moved to California with her mother in 1851. Her mother was running away (with her

second husband) from the polygamy of the Mormon Church. The family migrated to Los Angeles where, at the age of 17, Josephine published her first poems and married Robert Carsley. A rocky period followed, during which her marriage failed (it was dissolved just three years later, in 1861) and her infant son died. In 1862, following a deep depression, she moved to the Bay Area, taking the name Ina Donna Coolbrith. Coolbrith arrived in San Francisco with a reputation as a poet, and she befriended several prominent writers of her day: Samuel Clemens, Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard and Joaquin Miller.

In September 1873, Coolbrith was hired as librarian of the Oakland Free Library. During the next twenty years, she exercised her influence on Oakland's young writers and artists, most notably future writer Jack London and the mother of modern dance Isadora Duncan. Then, in 1906, Coolbrith's house was severely damaged in the devastating earthquake/fire that struck San Francisco. Most of her correspondence was burned, and the disaster quelled Coolbrith's hopes of writing an autobiography.

Today, those familiar with Coolbrith know her primarily through her associations with Harte and Clemens, or through her influence on Duncan and London. Scholars who discuss Coolbrith's work praise her influence and mentorship, but seldom offer a critical discussion of her legacy as a poet. Through my research, I hope to uncover critical discussions of her work that can serve as the basis for my own critical analysis of her poetry and its role in the literary traditions of California and the United States.

Focusing on Coolbrith's posthumously published *Wings of Sunset*, I have picked up on some common techniques and themes that seem to arise throughout her work. Initially, I noticed a prevalence of references to nature within her writing. But her nature poetry left me with a satisfied/peaceful feeling that was

difficult to pinpoint. It wasn't until I took a nostalgic drive along my elementary school bus route through rural Manteca that I realized the same sentimental familiarity I felt toward the sights, smells, and sounds of the San Joaquin Valley landscape is precisely what is evoked in me while reading Coolbrith's poetry. While the content is exceptional and important only in relation to its time, the sentiment expressed through her verse may hold resonance for 21st century readers. Though the landscape of Coolbrith's time is largely altered or non-existent today, the connection she identifies between humans and nature still exists. It is, however, something the average person rarely contemplates. With industrialization and urbanization, we have lost our connection to the intense bond with nature expressed in Coolbrith's poetry. The calming, crisp smells of almond blossoms, freshly cut alfalfa, or a new seasonal rain can bring out the same emotions that Coolbrith expressed in her poems. Digesting her poetry, the reader is re-connected with a nostalgic time before the rise of urban cityscapes.

Some of the poetic devices operating in her work include the precise use of rhyme and meter, tone, repetition, and imagery. Undoubtedly, her conventional form and subject matter are what led English poet and critic George Meredith to comment that Coolbrith's death brought an end to the Victorian literary period. Categorizing her as a Victorian writer would explain her strict adherence to form, meter, and rhyme. It is my hope that a further evaluation of her poetry will allow me to comment on these devices as they pertain to the conveyance of Coolbrith's noted themes.

The exciting part of this project is that I will be able to interact with primary texts and early publications of Coolbrith's work. Thanks to the interlibrary loan system, I have access to original copies of Coolbrith's three published collections of poetry: *A Perfect*

Day and Other Poems (1881), *Songs from the Golden Gate* (1895), and *Wings of Sunset* (published posthumously in 1929). Over the summer, I plan to visit the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, which contains Coolbrith's works and other relevant material (including letters and journals). Her early publications, appearing in literary magazines such as the *Overland Monthly* and the *Los Angeles Star*, are central to understanding the evolution of her poetic

style over the course of her life. Through analysis of her poetry, I hope to gain an understanding of her poetic sensibilities within the context of her time, and to assess the value of her poetry in the larger framework of American poetry and literature. Coolbrith's writings have revealed her to be a fascinating literary figure, and I am eager to learn more about the life and works of this forgotten California poet.

Annotated Bibliography

"About the Position of Poet Laureate." Library of Congress. 24 May 2006

<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/about_laureate.html>. This website is a valuable resource describing the process through which Poet Laureates are appointed. It also includes links that briefly discuss past and present poets laureate, including Ina Coolbrith.

Coolbrith, Ina Donna. *A Perfect Day and Other Poems*. San Francisco: John H. Carmany & Co., 1881. Coolbrith's first published collection of poems, *A Perfect Day* captures the essence of late 19th century California through poetic images of its coastal serenity, lush valleys, and towering Sierra Nevada mountains. This collection was received well by critics.

Cuff, Roger Penn. "An Appraisal of the American Poets Laureate." *Peabody Journal of Education* 25.4 (Jan. 1948): 157-162, 164-166. Cuff's article presents an account of the U.S. Poet Laureate tradition. Though most of the article discusses laureates of other states, the first page briefly references Coolbrith and the process that led to her being honored as California's first poet laureate.

"Ina Coolbrith (1842-1928)." *Prospectives in American Literature*. 23 May 2004.

<<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap6/coolbrith.html>>. Though this page doesn't speak directly about Coolbrith, it does provide a substantial list of resources that are useful to anyone studying Coolbrith's life and poetry. Professor Paul Reuben's website compiles lists of books, academic articles, and web articles relevant to Coolbrith. Reuben places Coolbrith within the American Naturalism literary movement.

"Ina Coolbrith." *Wikipedia.com*. 26 Feb. 2006. 24 May 2006

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ina_Coolbrith>. Although the biographical information on this site is brief, it provides several links vital to Coolbrith scholarship. There are links to several of Coolbrith's most famous poems, links discussing the title of Poet Laureate, and a link to the Mountain View Cemetery where Coolbrith is buried.

Rhodehamel, Josephine DeWitt, and Raymund Francis Wood. *Ina Coolbrith: Librarian and Laureate of California*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1973. One of the few books dedicated to the life and works of Ina Coolbrith, this biography provides a vast amount of information. Reflecting on Coolbrith's often-hidden Mormon past, two failed marriages, and various other tribulations that plagued her life, Wood and Rhodehamel present an in-depth, research-based glimpse into her childhood, adolescence, and

adulthood. Wood and Rhodehamel discuss at great length the writings and achievements of California's first poet laureate. Given its valuable biographic information, genealogical charts, index of works, and extensive bibliography, this is an unrivaled resource for anyone interested in the life and works of Ina Coolbrith.

Scharnhorst, Gary. "Ina Donna Coolbrith (1841-1928)." *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers: a Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. 73-76. Scharnhorst's article provides a brief and concise overview of the life and major works of Ina Coolbrith. Additionally, Scharnhorst touches on a few of the themes expressed in Coolbrith's work, and discusses poems that convey those themes. A section devoted to the critical reception of Coolbrith's work is also present, as well as a thorough bibliography. Scharnhorst's chapter provides only a brief overview to Coolbrith's life and works, but is a concise and useful starting point for further scholarship.

A Future Hope

Breann Wright

On a road, by a tree, two men wait for Godot. They chat, and argue, and rant, and sleep – and they wait. And keep waiting. At the end of the day, Godot has not come, and they leave. But by the next morning, they're back at the lonely tree again – waiting.

Some say that “nothing happens” in Samuel Beckett’s tragicomedy, *Waiting for Godot*.¹ On one level, I have to agree; but for a play of two acts wherein nothing happens, there are an astonishing number of undercurrents. The differences in perspective when examining the two main characters, Estragon and Vladimir, are telling and pointed observations of modern habit. This can’t be the only reason the play has survived so long when others fade into forgetfulness, but it is certainly one of them, and it is the one I’m going to look at now.

“Time, *n.*: A non-spatial continuum in which events occur in apparently irreversible succession from the past through the present to the future. An interval separating two points on this continuum; a duration: *a long time since the last war; passed the time reading.*” This might seem a clear-enough definition, and so it is... for a purely rational usage. Humans, however, are not objective by nature; rather we are subjective, and we are capable of experiencing time in a number of different ways. To Estragon, time does not exist in a linear sense. There is no yesterday, to Estragon, and there is no tomorrow. Now is the only time he knows, and everything else is a dream to him. When Vladimir tells him that it was Saturday that they were to wait for Godot, his response is, “But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday?

Or Monday? Or Friday?” (10) Fluid, time is more like a lake than a river, and undercurrents may swirl forward and backward while the surface is still smooth as a mirror of glass and iron.

Reality is a strange word: “The quality or state of being actual or true.” What is true to the mind? Certainly reality can be seen in different ways. Some perceive one thing and some another. A miracle is only a fluke chance of nature; a painting is ugly or beautiful. To Estragon, reality is harsh. Some would call him cynical; he’s jaded. “You should have been a poet,” Vladimir comments at Estragon’s description of the maps in a Bible’s back. Estragon responds, “I was,” and gestures towards the rags that serve him as clothing. “Isn’t that obvious?” (6) Expectations mean nothing to him. The strictures of polite society are not real. Many times, in the course of the play, he becomes bored with the current now.

Estragon: “Didi, let’s go.”

Vladimir: “We can’t.”

Estragon: “Why not?”

Vladimir: “We’re waiting for Godot.”

(8, 51, 76)

But to Estragon, Godot is an illusion, because Godot is neither here nor now. Existence is himself and Vladimir and whatever might happen by, but it doesn’t include the intangible obligation to wait for Godot.

There is a thing that is sometimes called faith and sometimes trust. It expects the best, even when there is no longer any reason to believe that it will occur. Its name is hope. “Hope is necessary in every condition,” Samuel Johnson wrote, and continued: “The miseries of poverty, sickness and captivity would, without this comfort, be insupportable.” Hope is the expectation of a future that is better than the now that one has.

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Waiting For Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (New York: Grove Press, 1954)

Estragon has none. He needs none, because he doesn't want a future. All he has is now, and he's content with that.

Vladimir is different. Though the two men have been together for fifty years and more, they do not share the same worldview or outlook. Their thinking processes are different. Where Estragon misquotes P. B. Shelley's "To the Moon," Vladimir is more inclined to ponder stories of the Bible (57, 5). Estragon is often beat; Vladimir is often the protector.

But more importantly, Vladimir knows the meaning of linear time; and if he does not always follow it, he does make the attempt. The past is the past, and yesterday was not six months or fifty years ago. A time spent in the Macon country is different than the *now*, here, in the Cackon country. Sometimes this angers Estragon, but Vladimir pursues the logical train of time and memory regardless:

Vladimir: All the same, you can't tell me that this (gesture) bears any resemblance to... (he hesitates) ... to the Macon country for example. You can't deny there's a big difference.

Estragon: The Macon country! Who's talking to you about the Macon country?

Vladimir: But you were there yourself, in the Macon country.

Estragon: No I was never in the Macon country! I've puked my puke of a life away here, I tell you! Here! In the Cackon country!

Vladimir: But we were there together, I could swear to it! Picking grapes for a man called... (he snaps his fingers) ...can't think of the name of the man, at a place called... (snaps his fingers) ...can't think of the name of the place, do you not remember? (68)

Yet even while Vladimir grasps after time, he considers it tricky: an enemy to be fought and laid hold of. Memory escapes him, and time is elusive, and of course Estragon is more conducive to the breakdown of time than anything else. The hours spent waiting for Godot are dreary, but alive, trying to trick him into Estragon's now - "All I know is that

the hours are long, under these conditions, and constrain us to beguile them with proceedings which – how shall I say – which may at first sight seem reasonable, until they become a habit." A little later, Vladimir becomes angry because, "A diversion comes along and what do we do? We let it go to waste... In an instant all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness!"

Reality, also, is more solid to Vladimir. A bruise is a bruise. A tree is a tree, and things are bound by time and physical limitations. Sleeping dreams are not reality – when Estragon wants to share his dream, Vladimir's reaction is violent. "Don't tell me!" Estragon ignores him: "I dreamt that-" and is quickly cut off:

Vladimir: DON'T TELL ME!

Estragon: (gesture toward the universe) What, this one is enough for you? (silence) It's not nice of you, Didi. Who am I to tell my private nightmares to if I can't tell them to you?

Vladimir: Let them remain private. You know I can't bear that. (10)

The possibility that the dream could be as real as the present is terrifying, and Vladimir avoids this thought at all costs. Waiting is the most important thing to him, keeping an appointment. As he is proud to point out, "We are not saints, but we have kept our appointment. How many other people can boast as much?" (91)

In the final analysis, Vladimir has embraced a future, or the *concept* of a future, which is far beyond Estragon's grasp; and this future gives him hope. He may not be certain of what he is hoping for – is it Godot, to help free him from this perpetual "now" that he is (yet also refuses to be) trapped within? Or does he hope for the day where he is no longer dressed in rags and wanting for food and money? Regardless, it is enough to keep telling Estragon, "We can't [go]... We're waiting for Godot."

Waiting for God? Oh.

Justine Keel

In *Waiting for Godot*,¹ Samuel Beckett presents an image of God and the need for meaning. This is accomplished in part through Vladimir and Estragon's on-going dialogue about Godot, who can be taken as a representation of God (or, if not a deity, as a force of change or meaning). It is also accomplished through discussions and speeches explicitly centering on God. The speech by Lucky is perhaps the most compelling yet difficult example of this.

Although it can be overlooked as only a welcome moment of silly distraction in a long, sometimes tedious play, the slave Lucky's speech is in fact quite a significant set of lines. There is profundity in its lunacy. At the beginning of the speech, Lucky states, "...a personal God...outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia, divine athambia, divine aphasia, loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell..." (Beckett 45). While Lucky himself has evidently suffered some type of cognitive breakdown (and continues to suffer from aphasia, judging from the incoherent nature of the speech), it seems that he was once an educated, capable person, considering his vocabulary and intimations of education. The intelligent nuances of the speech are Beckett's manner of communicating a central idea in the play to us: the nature of God and his relationship to man.

Lucky first describes God as personal. God, or something saving like God, is sought by Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo, and Lucky, but in an individualistic, rather than communal or religiously organized manner. They seek a

deity out of desperation and need for meaning and validation of their existence. The personal way in which the characters reach for God is much the same manner in which they relate to each other. They are separate, unentwined entities sharing a stage. The references of Vladimir and Estragon to God and the Bible are not so much reverent as speculative, yet both of them are waiting for Godot, for their personal savior. Lucky also describes God as being unrestrained by time. For Vladimir and Estragon especially, such a quality in them would be a blessed relief. A God unrestrained by time is a God without knowledge of human suffering such as the suffering of Vladimir and Estragon, for their trouble is caused by their desire to find a way to fill time, culminating in a series of activities and largely pointless diversions to keep time moving along.

Lucky's fabrication of the word '*apathia*' can be taken to mean apathy. Clearly, with Godot's continued failure to arrive at the appointment with Vladimir and Estragon, the symbolism is that God, or that life change or event which can rescue humanity, is apathetic, disinterested, not of help to the suffering. Perhaps most telling is the phrase "who loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell" (Beckett 45). Just as Vladimir and Estragon put their hope in Godot for their rescuing of sorts, continuing to stand by the same tree day after day until he shows up, so Beckett presents the suggestion that God forsakes the needs of some. Vladimir and Estragon believe that eventually through the passage of time, Godot will arrive for his appointment with them. Vladimir and Estragon are representations of those exceptions to God's love, to meaning, to salvation.

It is apparent that Vladimir and Estragon live passive lives. Estragon states, after being

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Waiting For Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (New York: Grove Press, 1954) It might be worth noting here that Beckett chose to emphasize the first syllable when pronouncing Godot's name.

beaten as he is every night, “I tell you I wasn’t doing anything” (Beckett 65) to which Vladimir responds, “Perhaps you weren’t. But it’s the way of doing it that counts, the way of doing it, if you want to go on living” (Beckett 65).

Focusing on this set of lines while keeping the general theme of the play in mind, I find a startlingly exact description of the lives of Vladimir and Estragon. They do not do much of anything; however, Vladimir’s remarks highlight the need for them to find a way to live such that their lives count for something. Unfortunately, their only activity is waiting, and waiting is inherently passive.

Another significant reference point is the underlying theme of exploitation. Lucky’s desperate attempt to prevent Pozzo from selling him brings to mind the kind of exploitation that has occurred between employer and employee, or between industry workers and big business. Vladimir and Estragon must subject themselves to a certain degree to whomever or whatever Godot is. For example, when discussing the deal between them and Godot, Estragon asks, “We’ve lost our rights?” (Beckett 15). Vladimir responds, “We got rid of them” (Beckett 15). In light of their agreement with Godot, Vladimir and Estragon have subjected themselves to his will, at least to some degree. In a similar way, each person, whether in her dependence on another or in her belief in God, must surrender some part of her free will, and often, particularly in the case of religion, she must surrender her freedom of thought or freedom to question, as well.

Near the end of the play, Estragon asks Vladimir what would happen if they stopped waiting for Godot. Vladimir tells him, “He’d punish us...Everything’s dead but the tree” (Beckett 107). Two possibilities in meaning arise from this passage. In stating that Godot would punish them should they fail to keep their appointment Vladimir is perhaps referencing a kind of fear that often keeps

people chained to their passive life-choices, or to their belief in God. This is a fear that can keep people waiting for God to show up, or for some external force to make their life change, so they won’t have to abandon their hopes and face going on with their life on their own initiative. Vladimir’s proclamation that “everything is dead but the tree” is an utterance reflecting his ultimate desperation, and seems to echo Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy, most importantly the infamous pronouncement “God is dead” spoken by the titular character in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.²

Throughout the interplay of this dialogue, Vladimir and Estragon reveal their need to be recognized. Vladimir, for example, longs to be remembered by the boy who comes to tell them Godot will be coming tomorrow. This recognition (which never arrives) holds the promise of a confirmation of his existence. More quintessential even than their need for human recognition is Estragon’s critical question to Vladimir: “Do you think God sees me?” (Beckett 87). For Estragon, this is an expression of his need for what might be considered the ultimate confirmation of his existence and value. But Vladimir is unmoved by Estragon’s quest for validation: “You must close your eyes.”

Through his characters, Samuel Beckett presents a unique depiction of the manner in which human beings view God or seek after meaning in life, as well as the ways in which they relate to one another and their world. The result is a work of existentialist philosophy, one that suggests a subtle, nagging sensation of the necessity for humans to generate their own definitions of meaning.

² F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1961). See also F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1974), §§108-125 and 343.

