

# The Light

The Official Newsletter of the Association of College English Teacher of Alabama

Special Conference Edition

April 2019

## A Special Edition

This issue of the ACETA newsletter is meant to showcase the exciting work shared by our members at this year's conference at the University of Montevallo. We had a wonderful turnout this year with forty-five attendees over the Friday afternoon through Saturday morning conference. Eighteen of those attending were either undergraduate or graduate students. The Steering Committee was very pleased with such a diverse turnout.

Molly Mize, a junior piano performance major at Montevallo, played during the Friday evening at dinner. Professor Emeritus of English and the former Director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Robert Collins shared his poetry during dinner as well.

On Saturday, the 2018 Eugene Current-Garcia winner, Dr. David Cowart of the University of South Carolina, delivered the keynote speech of the conference "Cormac McCarthy and the Widening Gyre." Conference attendees were still remarking on the power and insight of Dr. Cowart at the business meeting hours later.

With the 2019 conference in the books, the Steering Committee is already busy planning next year's conference. Be on the lookout for emails regarding locations and a call for papers in late July/early August.

This issue of the newsletter boasts a new feature: conference paper highlights. Each year ACETA recognizes the scholarship of faculty and students through the James Woodall Award for pedagogical essay, the William J. Calvert Award for theoretical essay, and the Mary McMillan Award for undergraduate writing; this year the Steering Committee offered the honorable mention winners for each award to submit their papers for inclusion in this special edition of the newsletter. We also invited conference presenters to submit versions of their work for inclusion. We hope to be able to highlight more work in future issues, and we thank the authors for their contributions.

As we head into the final weeks of our Spring semesters, please know that ACETA is proud of all the work you do on behalf of English studies throughout the state. Your good work inspires not only your students, but your colleagues as well.

Best,  
Anissa Graham, Executive Secretary



**ACETA**

Association of College English Teachers of Alabama

Est. 1948

Want to be on our mailing list? Send an email to our Executive Secretary, Anissa Graham, at [alcollegeenglish@gmail.com](mailto:alcollegeenglish@gmail.com).

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**Has your department hosted an interesting event? Have you started a new course or a new program?**

**Share your successes in *The Light* to let your colleagues in on your great work!**

**Submit your articles (350 words max. please) and photos to Anissa Graham at [alcollegeenglish@gmail.com](mailto:alcollegeenglish@gmail.com).**

## The 2019 Eugene Current-Garcia Winner Announced

Congratulations to Dr. Christopher Metress, the 2019 winner of the Eugene Current-Garcia Award! Dr. Metress will receive his award at the Author Awards Luncheon during the 22nd Annual Alabama Writers Symposium. For more information and registration, visit [www.coastalalabama.edu/aws](http://www.coastalalabama.edu/aws).



Chris Metress is in his eleventh year in the Office of Academic Affairs, where he has served in a variety of administrative and faculty roles, including associate provost for academics, special assistant for academic innovation, and founding director of the University Fellows Program.

As associate provost, Metress launched a number of university-wide initiatives that have expanded faculty and student opportunities for academic excellence. Working with the

Office of Global Engagement, he increased study abroad participation by more than 30% within two years, designing new funding models and assisting with the creation of new courses. He also led the university's first domestic study-away initiative, which culminated in the creation of a "Samford in D.C." partnership with the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. In addition, Metress oversaw the restructuring of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship, securing a full-time director and increasing funding to support early-, mid-, and late-career faculty.

Prior to becoming associate provost, Metress was named University Professor, an appointment reserved for faculty with an accomplished record of interdisciplinary teaching, service, and scholarship. Tasked to promote innovation and enhance the university's academic reputation, he helped to establish a biennial conference and summer institute on "Teaching the Christian Intellectual Tradition," worked across multiple colleges to redesign the university's approach to national fellowships and scholarships, and created the vision for the Hull Fund, a \$50,000-a-year faculty development initiative he designed in 2014.

From 2008-2012, Metress served as the founding director of the University Fellows Program, Samford's honors college experience and 2008 QEP. As director, he developed the program's great books curriculum, established

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new opportunities for undergraduate research and international study, and introduced multiple innovations that were later adopted across the university and the core curriculum. He also raised more than \$1,000,000 to create such initiatives as the Great Ideas Summer Institute and the Alabama Power Foundation Summer Research Program.

From 1993-2007, Metress was a member of the English Department, serving in the fall of 2003 as a Visiting Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kalmar University, Sweden. He has received more than a half dozen teaching awards, including honors at Vanderbilt and Wake Forest universities, as well as Samford's 2009 George Macon Memorial Award, given annually to a faculty member for outstanding performance as a teacher and mentor. He also served as the university's NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative for sixteen years, representing Samford in three different sports conferences and assisting with the hiring of multiple coaches and athletics administrators.

Metress has published more than one hundred essays and reviews in such journals as the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, the *Southern Review*, the *African-American Review*, and *Studies in the Novel*, as well as in collections such as *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and *The Cambridge Companion to American Civil Rights Literature*. He has published six books, including *The Lynching of Emmett Till*, a university press bestseller that was featured in news stories in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, and *Nation* magazine. In 2003

the Association of American University Presses named the *Lynching of Emmett Till* among its "Best Books for Understanding Race Relations in the U.S.," and the collection has been used in courses in more than 100 colleges and universities. He has also lectured widely on the intersections of literature, race, and history, including invited talks at NYU, the University of Virginia, Brown University, the University of Connecticut, and Wolfson College, Oxford.

--Text courtesy of the Alabama Writers Symposium Facebook page

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**Check out the Alabama Writers Symposium page on Facebook or Instagram or at <http://www.coastalalabama.edu/about/alabama-writers-symposium/>**

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**Mary Evelyn McMillan  
Undergraduate Writing Award  
Honorable Mention Winner**

**A New Critical Essay Without a Drop  
of Hyperbole in It**

From sonnets to sestinas, authors portray love in a myriad of ways. Much like a pentagonal dodecahedron made of snow, love is multi-faceted and requires more than a passing understanding. Traci Brimhall tackles the complex nature of love in her work "Love Poem Without a Drop of Hyperbole in It." The

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title alone raises several questions about the text. While the word “love” denotes a deep emotional connection, the term can refer to several different types of love. Given in the context of a love poem, the reader can safely assume that the love referred to is romantic. The phrase “without a drop of hyperbole” contains several literary devices, one of which is irony, thus following that the poem will, in fact, contain hyperbole. The word “drop” used in such a sarcastic manner is a form of understatement showing that the amount of hyperbole used in the poem will realistically be more comparable to a puddle rather than a drop. The title therefore casts an ironic shadow on the poem. Upon further reading, the tone of the poem becomes progressively grasping, yearning for the object of desire. The lack of stanza breaks and repeated use of both caesura and enjambment reveal the speaker’s narration to be stream-of consciousness. The speaker, who is assumed to be female for the purposes of this paper, details the extent of her emotion for her partner. In “Love Poem Without a Drop of Hyperbole in It,” Brimhall emphasizes the passionate nature of romantic love through various comparisons specifically invoking natural imagery, chess, and myth to show the deterioration of the romantic relationship.

The speaker describes the intricacies of her affection for her partner, referred to throughout the poem as “you,” primarily through similes. The use of similes helps the reader better understand what is meant by the word “love”. In each comparison, the word carries a slightly different connotation, which not only changes the meaning of each phrase

but also the dynamic of the speaker’s relationship with her partner. Furthermore, each comparison portrays a different facet of the relationship, revealing a new layer.

The speaker begins by giving a long list of similes. The first comparison reads “I love you like ladybugs love windowsills” (1). The relationship is natural, almost instinctual. Like the ladybug, the speaker finds comfort in her partner; like the windowsill, the partner represents the opportunity for relaxation. The image, partly drawn from nature, shows that the speaker and her partner are not unjustifiably matched, yet the marriage of a natural element and a man-made object cannot exist without strife. The ladybug’s bright red exterior represents the fiery red passion present in nature. On the other hand, the windowsill is completely passive, thus leading to the conclusion that the speaker wears the so-called proverbial pants of the relationship. The speaker, represented by the ladybug, seeks out her partner, represented by the windowsill, showing that the speaker puts forth effort into the relationship.

Moving away from the window seat, the next comparison also comes from nature but takes a darker turn. The speaker exclaims, “love you/like sperm whales love squid” (1-2). Sperm whales eat squid, which makes this image of love slightly unsettling. Love is painted as an act of violent feasting. The squid does, however, represent the object for which the whale scours the ocean; the simile emphasizes the consuming effect of love. This idea is continued in the next sentence, in which the speaker asserts that no depth could stop

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her from following her partner (2-3). However, the juxtaposition of this sentiment with the image of the whale devouring the squid prompts the reader to imagine a deadly hunt. While the windowsill represents a passive role in a romantic relationship, the squid represents an active role. Furthermore, the role of the squid shows that this relationship has deteriorated. The ladybug-windowsill relationship has positive connotations, while the whale-squid relationship has negative connotations, thus showing that the speaker-partner relationship has become warped in the romantic sense yet retains a natural quality.

Far from the depths of the ocean, the speaker then describes her relationship saying, "I love you like the pawns in chess love aristocratic horses" (3-4). The juxtaposition of this image with that of the whale and squid is striking. In the previous comparison, both creatures came from the ocean with nothing separating them. However, now Brimhall has introduced a class difference. The speaker is a pawn while her lover is a knight. The two are separated; they cannot share in communion, i.e. a shared meal, which is an intimate form of social interaction that involves deep communication. Furthermore, in chess, players often sacrifice the pawns to protect the knights, which are considered more valuable pieces. The simile offers a reading of self-sacrifice on behalf of the partner.

The chess metaphor is continued in the next few lines perpetuating the idea that the relationship is one sided. The speaker breathes life into the chess pieces stating:

I'll throw myself in front of a bishop or a queen/ for you. Even a sentient castle.  
My love is crazy/ like that. (5-7)

In these lines, Brimhall expands the issue of separation due to class. The speaker not only invokes the image of the clergy, but a queen. The reference to the bishop represents the devotion of the speaker. She would declare her love in holy matrimony. Yet, once more, the reader is left without the slightest whisper of her partner's feelings. Furthermore, as mentioned in line 6, the speaker would declare her love to a "sentient castle". The speaker would declare her love to the government, despite class differences and the outside forces attempting to keep them apart, thus showing that passion defies the laws of man. The castle also represents her partner. While the speaker makes a passionate declaration, the castle remains an immovable force showing that the relationship has become stagnant. The speaker then confirms the depth of her emotion in line 6-7, calling her love "crazy". Given the comparisons that the speaker uses to describe their relationship, the word "crazy" can best be defined as beyond reason. This definition therefore shows that what once was a natural romance has become diseased.

From the chess board and the house of royals, the speaker returns to the natural realm. In lines 9-10 the speaker states: "I love you like a vulture loves/ the careless deer at the roadside." Like the previous image of the sperm whale and squid, this image is also violent. A bird of prey is feasting on carrion. The speaker, represented by the vulture, takes nourishment from the lifeless. The relationship

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is, as aforementioned, one sided and thus corrupt. Furthermore, the deer is “careless” (10). The use of this word implies that the partner did not intend for the speaker to develop such intense feelings. The deer is dead. A healthy relationship cannot continue without two active parties.

The idea of a perverted relationship is continued in the next few lines. The speaker states: “I love you like Isis loved Osiris,/but her devotion came up a few inches short” (11-12). This allusion to the Egyptian gods confirms that the relationship between the speaker and her partner is dead. While Isis revived Osiris from the dead to have a child, he ultimately remained in the underworld. In the allusion, the speaker functions as Isis while her partner functions as Osiris. As seen throughout the poem, the speaker, like Isis, has put forth effort in to the relationship with, at times, a killer-like focus. Both the speaker and Isis act because of their passionate love for their partners. However, in both cases, the relationships deteriorate. Unlike Isis and Osiris, the speaker and her partner are not bound to each other for eternity; the speaker’s last sentiment echoes, “never, there is never enough” (24). The speaker makes this statement regarding her partner. The object that she has devotedly sought cannot meet the ideal she has created through the comparisons she gives.

Romantic relationships, as products of love, are, by character, complicated. Brimhall uses examples from nature to show how objects of affection can become tainted over time. The love starts innocently with ladybugs lounging on windowsills and ends with a penis eaten by

a fish. Passion, the cause of many a violent crime, can turn what once was dear into a thing of disdain by transforming the magical into the mundane causing the love to slowly fade. Just as easily, affection can turn into obsession as with the sperm whale and the squid. Love can also blur the line between reality and imagination, thus making what one has inadequate, leaving us, like the speaker, with an insatiable desire never to be fulfilled.

## Works Cited

Brimhall, Traci. “Love Poem Without A Drop of Hyperbole In It.” *www.newyorker.com*, 8 Jan. 2018, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/08/love-poem-without-a-drop-of-hyperbole-in-it](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/08/love-poem-without-a-drop-of-hyperbole-in-it).

*Joy Wilkoff is a senior English major with a creative writing concentration at Samford University. She recently completed a minor in German and plans to pursue a Master’s degree in publishing.*

## William J. Calvert Award Honorable Mention

### The Grammar of Grief: An Analysis of the Historical Present Tense in Mary Rowlandson's Subverted Narrative

Stories of capture are pervasive in American fiction and film, and in particular, captivity on the American frontier has been surrounded by mystique and steeped in mythology, at least in part due to James Fenimore Cooper's highly-romanticized (and frequently-criticized) version of captivity portrayed in *The Last of the Mohicans*. However, literature is often a reflection of or commentary on history and culture, and long before Cooper's Cora and Alice Munro were memorably taken hostage on the fictional frontier, "Indian captivity was very much a historical reality. . . and in one form or other it touched the imagination and fears of virtually everyone for whom it was a possibility" (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 2). As evidence, "[a]lmost 2000 captivity narratives were published before 1889"; further, this genre constituted "three of the four bestsellers in the colonies" between 1680 and 1720 (Samuels 844). Loosely defined, the captivity narrative may be described as "a single narrative whose primary focus is to record the experiences of individuals of European or African origin who had actually been captured by American Indians" (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 9); however, examination of Mary Rowlandson's early American classic *The*

*Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), "the earliest full-length . . . captivity narrative published as a separate book," provides insight into aspects of the captivity narrative that operate beyond the scope of this wide-ranging definition, particularly within the Puritan tradition (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian* xviii). Specifically, careful analysis of Rowlandson's use of language may reveal unexpressed grief and the possibility that due to her Puritan values, her narrative refrains from presenting the emotional and psychological realities of her experience in a clearly defined manner and instead allows her genuine human emotion to be suppressed by the expectations of her religious culture.

However, prior to exploring Rowlandson's religion or language, it is necessary to review the historical context surrounding her narrative in order to more completely grasp her experience. The setting for *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* is Southeastern New England during Metacom's War (1675-1676), a war that "in proportion to total population," was the "bloodiest and most destructive war in American history" (Salisbury 1). It took the lives of about 2,500 of the English as well as approximately 5,000 of the Indians, "roughly 5 and 40 percent, respectively, of the two peoples' populations" (Salisbury 1). Comparable to the Civil War, Metacom's War (also known as King Philip's War), was a conflict between neighbors rather than an attack by outsiders. For fifty years, the Native Americans and English had lived side by side, but by the 1660s, English agriculture was threatening the Native American way of life, as "continued expansion could come only" at their

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expense (Salisbury 2). However, what originally began as a “property dispute,” so to speak, quickly came to be “represented in terms of another kind of property: human property” (Burnham 11). Ultimately, this dispute would significantly alter Mary Rowlandson’s life.

Rowlandson, the wife of a Puritan minister, was taken captive during the attack on the English town of Lancaster, Massachusetts, by Nipmuc, Narragansett, and Wampanoag Indians (Salisbury 1). During her captivity, she witnessed the violent deaths not only of other English colonists but also of her daughter, relatives, and neighbors. Further, she endured separation from her husband and other two children and was forced to become a part of her captor’s society in order to survive (Salisbury 5). However, Rowlandson’s narrative is seemingly one of exemplary piety, associating “Indian bondage as bondage to sin and release as redemption” and always recalling that “God, far from abandoning her, was testing her and, through the medium of the destructive war with Indians, her fellow colonists” (Gustafson 102; Salisbury 5). She states that during her captivity her strength was renewed by the Lord and in the end, insists that she has learned the value of human life, espousing the characteristic position that captivity is a test of faith. In fact, “virtually everything that befell Rowlandson during her captivity . . . is held up as a divine lesson and a vital cog in God’s plan,” which leads Weidensaul to proclaim that “[a]t times . . . it seems that King Philip’s War itself was staged primarily for the spiritual edification of Mary Rowlandson” (175). Through God’s test, she

has experienced both suffering and redemption and has learned, as she clearly states, that “we must rely on God himself” (Rowlandson 112). The intended message of her narrative may be best summarized by Vanderbeets, who writes,

The religious expressions deriving from the captivity experience treat the salutary effects of the captivity, especially in the context of redemptive suffering; the captivity as test, trial, or punishment by God; and, finally and most demonstrably, the captivity as evidence of Divine Providence and of God’s inscrutable wisdom. (1)

Thus, many Puritan survivors of the captivity ordeal proclaimed that “[c]aptivity was God’s punishment; redemption was His mercy; and New England must heed the lesson or suffer anew” (Vaughan and Clark 1). However, this message of faith must also be balanced with the “tensions and expectations of Puritan society,” a culture that concentrated largely on the role of God in the providence of the collective community, rather than individual suffering (3). In fact, “Puritans were not at all interested in the personal types as individuals, subject to all the vicissitudes of life, but as examples of faith” (Rosenmeier 256). Also, according to Burnham and further demonstrating this collective orientation, there was an expectation of religious realization for the Puritan reader of Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, which is perhaps best exemplified by Clement’s statement that “many of the Puritan settlers found Rowlandson’s captivity, together with their own experiences in the wilderness of the New World, gave new meaning to life and new understanding to God’s purpose” (Burnham 11;

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R. Clement 54). Therefore, when considering what seems to be the prevailing theme of Mary Rowlandson's narrative, that God would not have subjected her to such an ordeal had He not intended her spiritual pilgrimage to enlighten her family and neighbors as well as herself, it is important to remember that her narrative was probably expected "to foretell in microcosm the fate of all Puritans" (Vaughan and Clark 4).

Thus, it is evident that the good Puritan should have realized that familial love and security were "ultimately temporal and must not supersede the love of God" (Vaughan and Clark 10). However, what if Mary Rowlandson's narrative was written in a way that, intentionally or unintentionally, it subverted these ideas about Puritan faithfulness and collectiveness and instead expressed individual anguish over the loss of home and family? It is true that in her last paragraph she states with great emphasis,

The portion of some is to have their afflictions by drops, now one drop and then another; but the dregs of the Cup, the Wine of astonishment: like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food, did the Lord prepare to be my portion. Affliction I wanted, and affliction I had, full measure (I thought) pressed down and running over; yet I see, when God calls a Person to anything, and through never so many difficulties, yet he is fully able to carry them through and make them see, and say they have been gainers thereby. And I hope I can say in some measure, As *David* did, *It is good*

*for me that I have been afflicted.*

(Rowlandson 112)

Rowlandson writes with such conviction that *perhaps*, "safe at last from the concrete experience of horror, wanting to believe that Providence does prevail, and calmed by familiar sights," she did mean what she wrote (Bredahl 14). However, what if, in the end result, the good minister's wife was still so affected by her personal anguish at the time of her writing that her narrative, while seemingly presenting a message of reliance on, dependence upon, and trust in God for guidance and healing, instead presented a message that undermined these Puritan values?

Rosenmeier points to "the tension between Rowlandson's stated purpose of using her captivity to compose an exemplary tale that would harmonize with the view of King Philip's War as a 'dreadfull judgement' on New England . . . and her profound though never explicit dissatisfaction and disagreement with the official Puritan interpretation" (255). Moreover, Dietrich discusses the presence of conflicting voices in Rowlandson's work, "the engaged suffering voice and the disengaged pious voice," and Ebersole argues against analyses of Rowlandson's text that "have failed to hear [her] voice expressing personal agency" (Dietrich 436; Finch 381-382). While Breitwieser contends that Rowlandson was attempting to contain her experience within the realm of existing Puritan convention, he sees her narrative as a representation of a "collision between cultural ideology and the real in American literature" (4). In essence, Breitwieser is proposing that Mary

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Rowlandson found a theological heritage that valued moral community lessons over the individuality of particular deaths insufficient in dealing with her own personal experience. Furthermore, Derounian believes that a duality arises in the narrative “from a clash of codes between Rowlandson’s psychological and religious interpretations of her experience” (qtd. in Breitwieser 83) and that she “suffered from psychological trauma akin” to the “survivor syndrome,” a term now used to describe “the mental and physical effects evident in survivors of mass persecution and natural disasters” (86). The survivor syndrome indicates “a type of traumatization of such magnitude, severity, and duration as to produce a recognizable clinical entity” (86). However, Derounian states that Rowlandson “tried to minimize the symptoms (which included depression, ‘emotional anesthesia,’ chronic anxiety, insomnia, hypermnesia and amnesia, survivor guilt, unresolved grief, and identity change) to conform to the Puritan doctrine of providential affliction” (83). Henwood takes a slightly different perspective, stating that Rowlandson’s misery can be detected in her choice of “twoedged” psalms found throughout the narrative (183), and finally, Burnham suggests that “[t]he very urge to write of her experience in order to ‘the better declare what happened to me’ attests to her memory’s resistance to easy containment within available Puritan modes of understanding” (24). It is significant that this duality in Rowlandson’s narrative also arises in the work of Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet. In her elegies written in memory of the short lives of three of her grandchildren, Bradstreet’s

struggle between being a good Puritan and a grieving grandmother is evident. Clearly she is having a difficult time dealing with the loss of her grandchildren and is at points bitter, as she comes dangerously close to blaming God in her elegy written for her namesake grandchild, Anne, when she states, “With troubled heart and trembling hand I write/ The heavens have changed to sorrow my delight” (Bradstreet 1-2). Like Rowlandson’s narrative, Bradstreet’s poetry is a bit subversive; although she may question God’s plan, she ultimately concludes each of the poems with the resolve that God is in control and/or that her grandchildren are in a blissful, joyous place. Thus, Bradstreet provides additional evidence that Puritan convention did not adequately allow for the mourning of such a significant personal loss.

Considering this duality exhibited by both Rowlandson and Bradstreet, both of whom were bound not only by Puritan values but also by strict codes governing acceptable female behavior, it is relevant to further explore the idea that Rowlandson is, as noted by Breitwieser, less the “exemplary Puritan” and more the “bereaved mother, a defender of mourning against theological sublimation” (Strong). As Freud explains, progress in mourning is “long-drawn-out and gradual,” and it seems quite probable that at the time of Rowlandson’s writing she was still in mourning for her lost child (Freud 236). Furthermore, it is notable that Freud’s account of loss and depression, articulated in *Mourning and Melancholia*, was written during the First World War, and the lasting impact of war should not be forgotten. Like Rowlandson, Freud’s children were involved, as both of his

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sons were fighting at the front (Bradbury 212). Thus, by incorporating this idea of grief and through an analysis of her language within the narrative, it can be posited that Rowlandson's narrative was a complex weaving of Puritan theological demands and the need for mourning, a version of King Philip's War "profoundly, though surreptitiously, at odds with the official view promulgated by Puritan officialdom" (Rosenmeier 257). Through close analysis of Rowlandson's language, this furtive disagreement rises to the level of consciousness.

Throughout the narrative, Rowlandson uses the "historical present tense," or the use of the present tense to refer to past events, and it is the use of this feature that can be analyzed to expand our understanding of her true emotions and psychological state. One example of this grammatical structure that might be found in everyday speech is as follows: "I *was* driving to school yesterday, and all of a sudden a woman *hits* me from behind!" There are several reasons why Mary Rowlandson might have used the historical present, and explanations include modeling as well as linguistic explanations, such as a syntactic rule, organization of the narrative, a theory citing complicating action clauses, and a traditional explanation. It is the traditional explanation that will serve as a basis on which to further develop the current discussion regarding the underlying grief in Rowlandson's narrative. However, at this point it is important to provide support for the position that the following analysis, based on Rowlandson's language, was indeed *Rowlandson's* language, or in other words, that she wrote the narrative.

The preface takes pains to "assure readers that the 'Narrative was penned by the Gentlewoman herself' and published in spite of her 'modesty.' In this way, it strives to overcome the doubts of those who believed a woman incapable of writing on her own" (Salisbury 46). Furthermore, it is "clear that Rowlandson, as the daughter of a woman who converted to Puritanism independently of her husband and as the wife of a minister, was sufficiently [immersed] in the Bible and in Puritan interpretations of it to draw such conclusions on her own" (47). Having clarified that Rowlandson was indeed capable of writing her own narrative, in order to proceed with the theory that it was her language that was telling of her emotional state, it is necessary to examine each of the possible explanations for her use of the historical present.

The first rationalization for Rowlandson's use of the historical present in her narrative is that she was modeling a popular writing trend of her day. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "the great classic of Puritan literature," which was published in 1678, four years prior to *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, uses the historical present tense (Damrosch 1968). As "the most popular book of its time and for long afterward a favorite text of English Protestant missionaries around the world," it is almost certain that Mary Rowlandson would not only have heard of the work, but read it as well (1968). In fact, Rowlandson's publisher, Samuel Green, Jr., advertised her narrative "as forthcoming in the first American edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1681" (Ebersole 18). Derounian discusses the advertisement:

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This advertisement not only provides facts about the book's publication, but also adds information to whet a prospective reader's appetite: he will learn many details ("particular circumstances") about the experience; he will see how a mere woman and her children tried to survive; and he will read a first-person account written "pathetically," that is, according to seventeenth-century usage in OED, "movingly" and "earnestly." The emotionalism underlying the book advertisement should have helped sales, as should its inclusion in Bunyan's masterpiece, which quickly established itself as the single best-selling work in America and England, excluding the Bible and certain other devotional or popular works like Aesop's fables. ("Publication" 249)

Thus, if the overwhelming popularity of *The Pilgrim's Progress* were not enough to convince us that Mary Rowlandson had undoubtedly read it, the fact that she allowed her narrative to be advertised in it would lead us to believe that she had probably read Bunyan's work while or perhaps before writing *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*. An example of the use of the historical present in *The Pilgrim's Progress* by the narrator, Christian, is as follows: "Now I *saw* in my dream, that just as they *had ended* this talk, they *drew* near to a very miry Slough, that *was* in the midst of the plain; and they *being* heedless did both *fall* suddenly into the bog" (Bunyan 1973). In this sentence, Christian is originally speaking in the past tense, and the

people in his dream *drew* near, but as he continues, he switches into the historical present and they *fall* (rather than fell) into the bog.

However, what also must be considered when analyzing Mary Rowlandson's narrative in light of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is that although one was fictionalized and one was not, both were first person narratives centering on similar themes: "loss, search and discovery" (Daemmrich 213). In addition, as first person narrators are more directly involved in the events they relate, it follows that they would "interchange the present tense" (M. Clement 18). Thus, while it is possible that Mary Rowlandson was modeling Bunyan's style, it is also reasonable that both used the historical present tense because they were relaying, to a certain extent, similar types of narratives.

Aside from modeling, there are several other, linguistic, explanations (which sometimes overlap and expand upon one another) that might explain Rowlandson's use of the historical present in her narrative. Among these explanations is Kiparsky's syntactic explanation, which posits that the historical present is an underlying form of the past tense (Wolfson, *Conversation Historical Present* 169). As a grammarian, Kiparsky's explanation is part of a long tradition of English verb literature that discusses the use of the present tense to refer to past events (169). A second linguistic theory, termed narrative subordination or foregrounding, explains that the historical present serves to organize the narrative, or in other words, to partition off events in the story from each other (Fleischman 852). In this sense, the historical present is

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viewed as organizing and arranging episodes and events (Fleischman 853). Discourse analysis, which has reopened the question of the historical present and concentrates on oral narrative, uses the term “tense switching” to describe narrative subordination. In addition, it has been suggested that the historical present tense is most frequently used in complicating action clauses, or the sections that tell the story by relaying a series of temporally ordered narrative events (Schiffrin 48). However, when analyzing the language of Mary Rowlandson, it is most plausible to consider the traditional explanation for the use of the historical present tense.

“Most commonly, the present tense has been seen as a means of vivifying, animating, or heightening events in the narrative past by making them ‘present’ in time,” states Brinton (221). This “traditional view” of this historical present was set forth by A. Graef (1889), and according to Lee, making things “present” can work in two ways: (1) the historical present can bring “the event before us” or (2) “us before the event” (Richardson 343; Brinton 176). In both instances the result is “a heightening of the narrated event, an increase in vividness, excitement, unexpectedness, suddenness, or suspense” (Brinton 222). However, in the first case, the narrated scene is simply brought to the reader, while in the second case, both “the narrator and the reader are transported to the narrated scene, entering the present of the story world” (222). The second case is most applicable when considering Mary Rowlandson’s narrative. Nonetheless, in this second case, we find that opinions are divided on whether the narrator is engaging in

dramatization or visualization (222). In dramatization, “historical present narrators become so involved in their stories that they recount the action as if they were reliving it simultaneously with its telling,” and in visualization, “they experience the events subjectively rather than viewing them objectively distanced in the past” (Fleischman 75). When considering these two possibilities, visualization more accurately describes the process which Rowlandson undergoes. It is not likely that Rowlandson cared particularly to “take the stage” as would be explained by dramatization. Instead, Rowlandson’s unresolved feelings regarding her experience are more connected with visualization. In this case, Rowlandson would have stepped “outside the frame of history, visualizing and representing what happened in the past as if it were present before [her] eyes,” an experience which might have resulted from her “lack of narrative distance” or her inability to achieve an “analytic perspective on” or “cognitive understanding of” her experiences (Frey 46; Casparis 23). As Bellos explains, “the interesting fact about narrative texts with alternating present and past tense verb forms is that the speaker/writer does not intend, and the reader/hearer does not understand, any alternation in the time-relationship between utterance and reference” (79). For Rowlandson, “having personally experienced or witnessed the happenings [she] relate[d] constitutes undoubtedly one of the most basic and stimulating factors in the use of the historical present” (Frey 50).

What must also be noted when considering this approach, however, is that the

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traditional explanation of the historical present has been critiqued. As stated by Brinton, “[r]ejections of the notion of vividness” have included calling it ‘vague’ or ‘not a helpful concept’ as well as the idea that “it is easy to find numerous exceptions in texts using the historical present where particularly exciting or important events are narrated in the preterite” (223). In addition, Richardson notes that the traditional approach has been criticized for its subjectivity (343).

In spite of this, Brinton holds that the traditional approach has validity and that vividness and dramatization are fruitful approaches, and Fleischman too agrees that this “past-more-vivid” explanation has merit. Furthermore, the idea that Mary Rowlandson “visualized” a past that she could not distance herself from when writing speaks a great deal about her personal grief and period of mourning. That Rowlandson was making the events “present in time” and even perhaps, “transported to the narrative scene” through writing seems to support the idea that she was coping with immense and, due to the nature of the Puritan culture, unexpressed, grief. Furthermore, there are two additional features of the historical present tense that support the claim that Rowlandson’s narrative is subverted by her own language.

The first of these two features is “the time factor.” The time factor states that “when stories are told (or in this case, written) about events which have occurred very recently, the probability of [historical present tense use] is much greater than if the event recounted happened in the more remote past” (Wolfson, *A Feature of Performed* 233). Clues in the

narrative such as her mention of her family’s trip to Boston in the past tense and the implication that her husband is still living suggest that it was written between 1677 and 1678, and thus, we know that the narrative was written at least one year and possibly two years after her captivity actually occurred (Rowlandson 40). Thus, if she is truly grateful for the affliction she experienced and redeemed through the salvation of the Lord, why does her narrative still use the historical present tense? Again, it is quite probable that it was her unresolved grief and her lack of narrative distance that motivated this writing style.

Moving on to the second of these two features is “the overridingly important event factor.” In this case, the historical present tense is used when a story is recounted because the event is so overridingly important to the person. Again, this can be connected to the traditional explanation for the historical present, to the idea that there is a lack of narrative distance. Furthermore, the “overridingly important event” situation occurs in its most extreme form when people are recounting disaster stories (Wolfson, *A Feature of Performed* 234). Obviously, this idea connects to Derounian’s survivor syndrome theory, and the idea that Rowlandson experienced a traumatization of great “magnitude, severity, and duration” (qtd. in Breitweiser).

At this point, it is essential to examine specific instances in which Rowlandson used the historical present tense in order to gain a clearer sense of the way in which she was

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drawn into a “visualized” past.<sup>1</sup> In the first example, Rowlandson is describing the trauma of enduring the attack which led to her removal. Being a victim of such an event is something that she has previously only heard about from other colonists: “[T]hey quickly fired again, and that took. Now **is** that dreadfull hour come, that I have often heard of but now mine eyes **see** it” (69). Undoubtedly, this moment of realization was harrowing, and it is interesting that a shift to the historical present occurs here. Another example appears during Rowlandson’s recounting of the eighth remove, which is a significant point in her journey in that this is when she meets King Philip. Shortly after Rowlandson meets King Philip, the Indians leave to raid North-Hampton, and Rowlandson states, “Now the Indians **gather** their Forces to go against North-Hampton: over-night one went about yelling and hooting to give notice of the design” (83). Moving to the twelfth remove, Rowlandson recounts that her mistress, Weetamoo, desires to turn back because her own child is sick. This is an “outrageous” moment for Rowlandson, who has suffered the loss of her own child (82). She writes, “But the thoughts of my going homeward ... much cheared my spirit, and made my burden seem light, and almost nothing at all. But ... the scale was soon turned: for when we had gone a little way, on a sudden my mistress **gives** out, she would go no further” (86). Thus, in each of these instances, Rowlandson marks a critical point in her journey with a grammatical shift.

In addition to the previous examples, it is worthy of note that the said/says alternation, which is seen repeatedly in Rowlandson’s narrative, has been found by both Johnstone and Wolfson to be a documented feature of personal-experience narratives, again pointing to the more individual aspects of Rowlandson’s narrative rather than an adherence to collective Puritan values. Several examples of this feature are as follows:

“I asked him to give me a piece: *What, **sayes** he can you eat Horse-liver?*” (81).

“Look here, *Mother (**sayes** he), did you read this?*” (82).

“I told him when my Husband came I would give him some: *Hang him Rogue (**sayes** he) I will knock out his brains, if he comes here*” (97).

“And now, **sayes** he, he will eat horse with any *Indian* of them all” (98).

By shifting to the present tense in these instances, Rowlandson is introducing the reported discourse and bringing it to the reader as if it were currently taking place. This not only allows the reader to feel the action of the narrative in present time but also indicates Rowlandson’s state of mind as she relives the magnitude of the conversations she both participated in and overheard during her ordeal.

A final category of examples exhibits a third structure, which involves the use of the

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of the historical present tense are in bold.

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auxillary verb *must* with a present tense verb. As an example, Rowlandson states: “Now away we **must go** with those Barbarous Creatures” (70). These examples, like the others, do have the effect of bringing the reader into the moment. However, there are several possibilities for the underlying meaning of this structure. One option is irrealis mood, which is an unreal condition analogous to the future tense to an extent but not productive in that the action is not known to have occurred; in other words, irrealis is “not an observable fact of reality” (to illustrate, the subjunctive in English – e.g., “If I were king”) (Nikolaeva 80). Hence, in the case of irrealis, Rowlandson is in the moment with her reader, pondering the future. Another consideration is elision (for instance, “*I knew I must goe*”), but this presumes an underlying structure that is modified as it moves to the surface, and it doesn’t seem that this is what is happening. In addition, the underlying form of the previous example could be “I know” just as well as “I knew.” As yet another possibility, the OED suggests that when *must* is used in the historical present tense that it is “sometimes used satirically or indignantly with reference to some foolish or annoying action or some untoward event” (qtd. in Landry). This is a conceivable meaning when Rowlandson writes, Now **must we pack up** and be gone from this Thicket, bending our course toward the Baytowns, I having nothing to eat by the way this day, but a few crumbs of Cake, that an Indian gave my girle the same day we were taken” (92). Certainly, she is indignant, and being forced to travel without nourishment is “untoward.” Finally, a distinct possibility in

the context of Rowlandson’s narrative is that the meaning of *must* is necessity (have to). In this case, she may be using the modal to stress that she is being forced to do the things she is doing. Further, “**I must sit** all night with my sick child” is a stronger way of expressing her situation than “I sit all night with my child” (Rowlandson 73). She expresses this sense of necessity and/or force perhaps most clearly when she states, “I went to take up my dead child in my arms to carry it with me, but they bid me let it alone: there was no resisting, but **goe I must** and leave it” (75). In this most heart-wrenching part of the narrative, just after the death of Rowlandson’s daughter Sarah, she lapses into this *must* + present tense construction and as readers, we are reminded that her daughter’s death is still very present for her.

Thus, after reviewing these instances of the historical present in Rowlandson’s narrative, despite Puritan orthodoxy, it is evident that Mary Rowlandson was an individual who experienced an overridingly important event, yet was denied the opportunity to fully express this. Her situation is described in the preface in the following way: “This Narrative was penned by the Gentlewoman herself, to be to her a memorandum of Gods dealing with her, that she might never forget, but remember the same, and the severall circumstances thereof, all the dayes of her life” (Rowlandson 65). However, when taking into account both her religious and cultural restrictions as well as her use of a revealing grammatical construction, it is possible to argue something very different –

that she couldn't forget, and instead wrote to assuage her grief.

When considering Rowlandson's stated purpose and juxtaposing it with this unexpressed grief, it is interesting to reflect upon an engraving that was printed in an 18<sup>th</sup> century edition of Rowlandson's narrative. This image portrays her as courageously armed, which is not a claim she made in the narrative. In fact, this engraving in question "first appeared in a children's adventure story, 'The Life and Adventures of a Female Soldier,' in 1762" (Salisbury 52). The explanation is that as the American Revolution approached, "the threat posed by Indians was equated in many colonists' minds with the threat posed by the British. Men, and even women such as Rowlandson, were touted as examples of patriotic resistance" (52). Hence, "when the printer decided to produce a new edition of Rowlandson's narrative, he reused the engraving ...ignoring the fact that Rowlandson never claimed to have wielded a gun or physically resisted her captors" (52).

Much like this engraving presented Rowlandson as an example of patriotic resistance, her narrative presented her experience as a testament of the Puritan faith. Or, as stated by Vaughan and Clark, her narrative was probably expected "to foretell in microcosm the fate of all Puritans" (4). However, just as Rowlandson's symbolic status as a patriot does not mean that she ever wielded a gun, her testament of Puritan faith does not negate her human suffering.

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## James Woodall Award Honorable Mention

### Exploring Gaming in the Classroom: A Pedagogical Approach and Practical Discussion

Most of my fondest memories of learning in elementary school are of the assignments I completed with just a handful of my school-age peers in RLC (Resource Learning Center). Six friends from my age group of students met every day in an additional class with Mr. Ron Seitel, the gifted learning program instructor. I fondly remember helping my friend and project partner, Katie, hollow out several small logs as we built a visual representation of how Native Americans hollowed out canoes for one science lesson. I remember drawing a large circle with my mother's mixing bowls on a piece of cardboard and decorating it as a game board as that same partner and I created a learning game for the class about the Earth: after making the game board, we turned our attention to making small blue circles colored like the Earth with Earth facts on it for the game cards. What the goal of the game was (other than learning facts about the Earth) I now cannot remember, but overall memories of learning projects like these made the process of learning not only fun, but also real to me. As a teacher myself today, I look at the habits of students in both their academic and social settings and see that much of that kinesthetic learning I once did in school often falls by the wayside. In academic settings, I see students that only want to 'know what is on the test,' and even when they are given that background

information for a test, oftentimes the application of this information is not what they are able to come up with. However, in social settings, I see students constantly with phones in their hands: they use the internet to search information at a moment's notice; they are taking pictures of themselves and the activities they are doing; they search social media sites to see what other people are doing; they put all sorts of gaming apps on their phones to play games with their friends or with random strangers; in essence, they are constantly in contact with a device that allows them to *experience*. It is this kind of experience that new advancements in STEM type classes focus on. And although STEM subjects themselves are often more easily adapted for kinesthetic experiences, other subjects like English (including composition, literatures, and subject area writing classes) should not count themselves out of the ability to offer kinesthetic learning experiences for students. My own predisposition toward a kinesthetic learning style, and my desire to keep learning in my classroom relevant and modern has opened my eyes to a realm of gaming techniques in the classroom. Specifically, I looked at using the popular phone app/game *Trivia Crack* as a means for deeper literature class involvement, and I created and incorporated an Escape Game, like the popular *Breakout* or *Locked-In* businesses offer, for both a developmental English class and a literature class. It is through the development of assignments that have my students creating, and consequently playing, games like *Trivia Crack* and *The Great English Escape* that I have seen success in the notion of gaming pedagogy.

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The first game I began using in my literature classes was a version of the popular *Trivia Crack* game available for download on mobile devices. *Variety* magazine describes this game and its popularity: “this Trivial Pursuit-style game has become an addictive pastime for more than 20 million daily players, and broken download records” (Saperstein). Players answer random questions in a chosen or spun subject area including geography, science, history, sports, art, and entertainment. If a player gets the question right, choosing the correct answer out of four given choices, he or she gets to spin again and answer another question. Once a player gets three questions correct in a row, he or she gets a chance to earn a crown in the subject of his or her choice. The player that gets all the crowns before the other player wins the game. Whether the player is just guessing at an answer or actually knows the answer is hard to determine, but players learn information by playing this game. One writer, in the article “Trivia Crack Shows It’s The Latest Addiction,” begins by stating, “Search ‘Trivia Crack’ on Twitter, and you’ll find a common refrain: ‘I learn more on Trivia Crack than in school’” (Hinchliffe). It was this kind of sentiment that I was betting on for use in my literature class. For the assignment, each student (35 students in a class) signed up for an author that would be discussed during the semester. Some authors might have been used more than once, depending on need. The assignment asked students to create five questions in each of the six categories using information about the author and his or her works. I kept the same categories as the original mobile app, so students created

questions based off biographical information of the author, contextual information during the time period the author was writing, and inferential information in arts and entertainment categories dealing with the writings from the author. The science and sports questions were the most difficult to create for most all the students because many literary works did not have a specific science or sport aspect to them. In this arena, I gave the students creative license to create these types of questions: one example I gave them was a question like “What would Jonathan Edwards say his congregants’ favorite sport is?” Answers to pick from were 1. jousting 2. tight-rope walking over the pit of hell 3. water-polo 4. speed skating over an icy pond. Obviously, Jonathan Edwards did not talk about sports in his piece “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” but he used imagery like “Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight” (433) and “so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by: thus easy it is for God, when he please, to cast His enemies down to hell” (431). Students answering this question would thus, one, see the logic in not choosing jousting, water-polo, and speed skating, and two, infer that tight-rope walking over the pit of hell would be an image produced from reading this piece. This creativity allowed the students to create questions that might not readily be evident or direct in the author background or literary work. Students were given specific directions on the method of creating these questions: use 3x5 index cards cut in half;

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write or type the question (with the 4 answer choices) one side of the card; write or type the answer on the other side; group the questions by subject. Once students turned their work in, I took on the job of checking the questions to make sure they were correct, and then placing a colored sticky note over the answer side; the sticky note color corresponded to the color I chose for each of the six subjects. Once all students' cards were checked and sticky noted, I shuffled the cards in each subject area and then put a selection of cards from each subject into groups; in all, each group had between 50-60 cards, including around 10 of each subject area. When the students played the game in class the first semester I did this, some groups reused several of the question cards if they got through all of them, but reusing cards ensured the students would know the answer!

Subsequent semesters, I had more classes create questions, so the question banks got larger and larger. The class played the game (including homemade spinners) in groups of two students during a class period, and the winners of the groups during each game would then play winners of other groups, and thus the overall class winner was chosen. Although many students said they put a lot of time into the questions, all students said they enjoyed the experience; they all walked away with extra knowledge about the author they made questions for, along with random information about other authors and their works. One student during the first semester of this experience shared her thoughts with me on this new method of assignment:

The Trivia Crack game was the 'breath of fresh air' at the end of the semester for me. Not only did I have the chance to learn a great deal about a certain author and time period, but I also had the chance to think creatively. I had a blast coming up with interesting questions. Plus, getting to play the game with the rest of the class made it even more fun. Moving around the classroom gave us the opportunity to talk to others in the class we normally didn't sit by. (Mims)

This was not the only positive comment I received; in fact, I did not get a single negative comment from the class. Another student mentioned how the game gave the class a chance to learn beyond the classroom:

Personally, I liked the Trivia Crack game because it allowed you to learn things beyond what we discussed in class. We went over the information that we discussed in class, but the game allowed us to learn random and interesting facts regarding certain ideas from the class. It is surprising how much you remember when you are learning random facts rather than just going over information in a uniform way. I think playing a game also kept people interested in what we were learning because it was different from just sitting in a classroom and discussing the material. (Waldrop)

The only note of concern several students wrote was about the difficulty of creating questions, like the sports and science questions, if their stories and authors did not directly deal with those subjects. However, putting the students just outside of their

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comfort zone pushed them to think critically and creatively about the authors and their works. Also, this assignment was given to the students at the beginning of the semester and was due near the end of the semester, so the students had several months to work on their game questions a little at a time. The collection of the cards and separation of them into categories was labor intensive on my end, but it was worth it. I observed that the work the students put in to creating the questions gave the students both opportunity to learn extra content that might not have been covered in class and the opportunity to critically think about formulating questions with information not directly fitting into geography, science, history, art, entertainment, and sports categories. In having the students play the game in class, I observed a communal experience for the classroom overall; however, I also observed the students reaching individual victories by answering questions correctly or winning their rounds. The creation of this *Trivia Crack* game assignment made students responsible for their one author and works, gave them a social and interactive goal to work toward, and allowed them to learn in the process.

The *Trivia Crack* game success fueled my desire to continue offering this kind of kinesthetic experience in my classes; this desire culminated in the creation of *The Great English Escape Room* game. The purpose of this game was not as widespread as the *Trivia Crack* game with its inclusion of the students in the creation of the content; I created the game itself and the students would play it. This game was going to last only one class period and

teach students how to critically read and think: it was created to help students bolster skills needed in English class. An article examining this new wave of game describes what an 'escape room' is: "Generally, the games begin with an employee gathering you and your friends at a door to give you a spiel...Then a clock starts, and you start looking for puzzles: hidden compartments, trick mirrors, two-way radios, carpets woven with concealed messages...Each puzzle leads to the next, which eventually leads to a key to unlock the door" (Young). Personally, I have played three of these different escape games at the venues around Birmingham, and I thought this would be the perfect conduit for challenging students' skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and even inference, vocabulary, and spelling. The first escape game I created was for the Developmental ENR 098 classroom. The escape game consisted of different puzzles that the students had to solve to continue opening more puzzles to solve and eventually unlock the final lock that would let them out of the classroom. All of the materials began secured in a tool box; students were given directions and a vocabulary meaning sheet and were told to begin. The first challenge was for students to circle the meaning of the underlined word in a sentence by using context clues of the sentence. An example of one of the sentences is "The scared rock climber balanced **precariously** on the edge of the cliff" ("Look Around!"). Answers to choose from included "gracefully, lazily, dangerously, and hopefully" ("Look Around!"). Once students chose the correct answers to all the questions on the first sheet, they found a key to open the tool box

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that then held a small locked backpack (locked with a directional lock), a dictionary, a colored dice, a novel, and a piece of paper discussing a fictitious book signing for the novel. By reading the piece of paper, students found directional clues to open the backpack. Held within the backpack were several other items: another locked bank bag (locked with a three-number lock), a calculator, an envelope with some papers inside, and a locked diary (locked with a keyed lock). To get inside the diary, students had to unlock the bank bag by using the papers in the envelope and the dictionary from the first opened box. The diary held a letter the students had to read for comprehension, and with that knowledge, they answered questions which finally gave them letters to then use to open the lock to the classroom door. All the locks were color coded by the same color as the dice that was inside the toolbox to begin with as well. Overall, students used this 'locked-room' game to understand vocabulary words, work with inference, and read for comprehension. It also helped the students work together and solve puzzles in a variety of ways. This game worked so well in the developmental class that a colleague of mine and I revised it for a literature class we both taught on two different campuses featuring Nathaniel Hawthorne's work "The Birthmark." Students followed many of the same steps as the original developmental class game, but the quiz information changed along with the close reading questions and other puzzles within the toolbox. This fall was the first semester I have used these escape games in either class (developmental or literature), so I do not

currently have written student feedback. However, the feedback I got while observing the classes go through the games was positive. Students were talking with one another, they were looking up words they did not understand or know, they were diving into the material presented before them, all in a completely new format from a traditional lecture. This type of game was a nice break from lecture, discussion, lab work, or writing, and *The Great English Escape Game* gave the students in both classes a chance to put literary skills to work in a completely different environment.

Inevitably, my love for changing class assignments and activities every semester led to the development of this kinesthetic engagement for several classes thus far. The *Trivia Crack* game is one that students can relate to because they download virtual versions of it (or games just like it) on their smartphones at alarming rates; using it in the classroom just means that they are learning something about the subject at hand and engaging in a new way. *The Great English Escape Game* is another relatable experience for students as the locked room businesses continue to grow and entice visitors to test their puzzle-solving skills; unlocking a classroom not only gives students the ability to see an immediate result and feel pride from succeeding, but it also challenges them with essential English reading comprehension and inference skills. Overall, my continued use of these games, and others, has been encouraged by students who feel like they get a different experience with the information being presented, and I love to see the creativity and the problem-solving ability put in play when

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students are creating questions or solving riddles.

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## "Sun's Too Hot— Should Like a Little Ice": Queer Friendship and the Horror of Masculinity in E.M. Forster's *Maurice*

"If my individual life is to be enclosed within the huge corrupt lie of society to-day, purity and the dirty little secret, then it is worth not much to me," D.H. Lawrence wrote in 1929 against the censorship of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. "Freedom is a very great reality. But it means, above all things, freedom from lies" (49). An admirer of Lawrence, E.M. Forster wrote his novel *Maurice* between 1913 and 1914, with some minor revisions afterward, but it remained unpublished, and virtually unknown, therefore effectively censored, until its publication in 1971. Maurice Hall, the protagonist, emerges into male sexual being, yet he feels a deep longing for his male comrades, which leaves him confused about these innermost feelings for his own sex. And so, through queer friendship and heartache, we see Maurice claim possession of his body against tradition and prejudice. In *De Profundis*, Oscar Wilde, so much a gay rebel himself, declares: "To reject one's own experiences is to arrest one's own development. To deny one's own experiences is to put a lie into the lips of one's own life" (60).

Queer friendship, although at times endangered, eroded, and eradicated by the straight lie, remains a constant pulse in Forster's novel. In regard to homosocial relations between men, even nonsexual contact carries the potential of exposing queerness and

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therefore potentially inducing homosexual panic. With both the sexual and nonsexual being collapsed into each other, as if the literal act of intercourse does not matter much at all, perhaps homosexuality, instead of simply being a sexual act in itself, also involves a reorientation of one's positioning in the surrounding political economy of (hetero)sexual desire. One wars against the imposed, predestined sex roles, determining love for oneself beyond the limitation of convention. Speaking to this idea, Michel Foucault writes that gayness (i.e., homosexuality) presents, in its potential, a pathway to friendship, love, and happiness among men that disrupts the policing and regulation of human sexual desire. "To imagine a sexual act that doesn't conform to law or nature is not what disturbs people," he wrote. "But that individuals are beginning to love one another—there's the problem" (Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life" 136-137). Friendship and love between men, such as that between Maurice and Scudder (Alec), undermines the heterosexual social order in the potential to create new forms of relating between and among men across society.

Considered a "masculine virtue," self-control, or what the ancient Greeks once called *sophrosyne*, encouraged the denial of men's selves in favor of an impassionate, temperate image that pleased, such as that of the ideal husband later seen in the nineteenth century (Carson 126). Forster even likens Maurice to the boy's father, "who had passed in the procession twenty-five years before, vanished into public school, married, begotten a son and two daughters, and recently died of

pneumonia" (11). Later in the novel, we discover that, like Maurice, his father preferred men to women. Based on this earlier description, Forster exposes the dullness of conventionality. A typical life for a male following the conventions of his expected sexual and economic role could be summarized as follows: A boy plays with other boys, innocent in his childhood, not too different even from his female counterparts, although socialized as if boy and girl exist in two entirely separate species. Then, this boy grows into adolescence where his sex instinct ignites, stirring the passions within him. Prior to puberty, we must remember, years of socialization enshrine his sex, that is, his maleness, as central to his social existence. Entering into manhood, he experiences and explores his desires, except he finds them, whatever they may be, channeled not biologically but socially toward the female sex only in the exclusivity of the monogamous heterosexual marital relation. Despite his well-suppressed, innermost longings which contradict his socially prescribed roles as husband and father, he must reproduce, if possible, fulfill his place in the existing workforce, use his economic resources to sustain his wife and children, and then die.

Of lies in relation to male sexual being, feminist theorist bell hooks writes, "Lying about sexuality is an accepted part of patriarchal masculinity" (79). For men to exist as men, they must feed upon lies, fit into their sexual roles, lie and pretend if they must do so, and remain imprisoned within themselves, thoroughly distorted from the exterior to the interior. Desiring a "cure" for his

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homosexuality, Maurice visits a hypnotist named Mr. Lasker Jones who, after failed attempts, exposes English social expectations as being against human nature: “England has always been disinclined to accept human nature” (Forster 211). This disinclination reveals the unnaturalness and abnormality of imposing heterosexuality upon all bodies existing in a particular sex/gender system. We see the havoc such attempts at “straightening” cause as Maurice wanders, an outlaw to the “beautiful conventions,” with “the wrong words on his lips and the wrong desires in his heart, and his arms full of air” (Forster 165). In 1914, the few above insights about the farce of heterosexuality alone—just a few sentences questioning heterosexuality and arguing in favor of truths over lies—would have been enough to ruin Forster’s career as a writer and, if not lead to his imprisonment, result in ostracization and torment.

And Forster even provides Clive as an example of the man possessing what he perceives as the masculine virtue of *sophrosyne*, practicing it every day as Clive somehow can make his passion into something abstract and intangible. In describing his conversion from homosexual to heterosexual, what he calls a change in him “merely physical,” Clive brushes away his inner pain: “The love of women would rise as certainly as the sun, scorching up immaturity and ushering the full human day, and even in his pain he knew this” (Forster 130). Clive describes the love of women as a ray of light that must penetrate him, thereby dominating him, as if he fantasizes about himself as the passive receiver of love. What Clive knows of passion,

however, he knows because of the love between Maurice and himself, planted and nurtured in their queer friendship, not grown from the tradition and prejudice of heterosexuality. Clive reflects upon his relationship with Maurice, seeing it as a stepping stone which “lifted him out of aestheticism into the sun and wind of love. But for Maurice he would never have developed into being worthy of Anne” (Forster 163). Clive transitions from liking Maurice to liking Maurice’s sister Ada (who looks like Maurice) to liking Anne, requiring a transition each time in his attempt to reach his idealized masculine self, uninhibited by what he perceives as abnormal desires for other men.

We also see the sun appear in relation to looming threats posed to the mask of heterosexual masculinity, such as when Maurice faints after playing cricket upon seeing Scudder (Alec) with his shirt open at the throat. While growing violently sick, Maurice expresses his distaste for the constraints of convention and how it presses upon him: “Nothing’s the same for anyone. That’s why life’s this Hell, if you do a thing you’re damned, and if you don’t you’re damned—,” he paused, and continued. ‘Sun too hot—should like a little ice’” (Forster 203). Whether Maurice chooses heterosexuality or homosexuality, he finds himself imperiled. Here, Maurice panics in his homosexual desire for Scudder (Alec), a man of lower class and lesser social status. Desiring a little ice perhaps indicates a felt need for separation, even if brief, from the trigger of his peril, a quarantining of his otherwise tainted masculine self from what could be perceived as the exposure of his hidden queerness.

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A man enters homosexual panic when he experiences peril or terror toward another man whom he perceives as a threat to his perceived heterosexual identity; a male homosocial bond goes from safe to unsafe. Violence characterizes this panicked behavior. As Sedgwick writes, an importance of the category “homosexual” does not lie in its “regulatory relation” or to a “nascent or already-constituted minority of homosexual people or desires,” but rather the “structuring definitional leverage over the whole range of male bonds that shape the social constitution” (*Between Men* 86). In regard to homosexual panic, homophobia offers domination, “not only over a minority population, but over the bonds that structure all social form” (Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 87). Here, Sedgwick introduces the distinction between minoritizing and universalizing discourses, elaborated on in *Epistemology of the Closet*. She adds that, to be sexed or gendered, involves the overlap of “a universalizing discourse of acts or bonds and at the same time a minoritizing discourse of kinds of persons” (*Epistemology of the Closet* 51). As Foucault once observed, “a real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation,” for “homogeneous effects of power” (*Discipline and Punish* 202). Power remains diffuse, split across not only the minority population but also the entire population, thus effectively policing and regulating the shape of bonds between men and women and therefore exerting control upon the masses in regard to sex roles and gendered expectations for the sexes.

Of homosexual panic, Sedgwick writes, “Homosexual panic is not only endemic to at

any rate middle-class, Anglo-American men (presumably excluding some homosexuals), but a mainspring of their treatment of politics and power—not least, of course, in relation to women” (*Between Men* 201). As we saw with Maurice’s reaction to Scudder’s open shirt, during which the sun was too hot, any amount of tension exerted upon a man can cause peril. After Clive has seemingly healed from an actual illness, prior to his renunciation of his homosexuality, he faints and cries and says “I’m a fool” after Maurice kisses him (Forster 104). The very touch of Maurice’s lips upon him makes him ill and uneasy. When Clive has confessed his physical change from homosexuality to heterosexuality, he gazes upon Maurice, terror building: “He was looking with growing dismay into the face he had once loved. The horror of masculinity had returned, and he wondered what would happen if Maurice tried to embrace him” (Forster 126). Panic enters Clive’s mind as he stares at Maurice because, although Maurice had not threatened his *homosexual* masculinity, the idea of Maurice embracing him—especially the act—poses a severe threat to his *heterosexual* masculinity.

Maurice and Scudder (Alec) share their bodies with each other at Penge, Clive’s own house, and this act, in itself, defies the conventions of gender and class. But the way in which Forster describes the physical love between Maurice and Scudder (Alec) indicates how any intimate physical touch between men can transform into an outward expression of otherwise internalized panic. “Physical love means reaction, *being panic in essence*, and Maurice saw now how natural it was that their

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primitive abandonment at Penge *should have led to peril*,” Forster writes, “They knew too little about each other—and too much. *Hence fear. Hence cruelty*” (226) (emphasis added). “Panic in essence” defined by fear and cruelty at otherness creates the formula for a man alienated from his selfhood because he has learned manhood. Both Maurice and Scudder (Alec), although homosexual male lovers, remind each other that, indeed, either one could have killed the other in a fit of rage.

When Maurice reveals that he has “shared with Alec,” all that he has, including his body, this revelation triggers panic in Clive. Forster’s details regarding Clive’s actions and thoughts indicate deceit in Clive’s feigned self-control about his sexuality: “Clive sprang up with a whimper of disgust. He wanted to smite the monster, and flee, but he was civilized, and wanted it feebly. After all, they were Cambridge men...pillars of society both; he must not show violence” (243). He springs up, whimpers in disgust, and considers killing his past lover who, in the moment, appears as “the monster.” Clive’s fight-or-flight response, almost driving him to show violence and dirty his hands, indicates the panic Maurice triggers in him. So much for *sophrosyne*, it would seem.

Told the lie that heterosexuality must be his destiny, Maurice defiantly navigates his life, finding that he cannot quite play his part as a heterosexual male in the sex/gender system which existed before his birth and in which he must live. Earlier in the novel, channeling Wilde, Maurice passionately declares his rejection of lying about his own experiences after having “been fed upon lies”: “He would live straight, not because it mattered to anyone

now but for the sake of the game. [...] He loved men and always had loved them. He longed to embrace them and mingle his being with theirs” (62). As a middle-class, closeted homosexual male who ultimately falls in love with Clive’s gamekeeper Scudder (Alec), Maurice challenges the existing conventions of not only gender and sexuality but also class. Free from lies, Maurice learns to value his own experiences in revealing the truths of his life. With no more lies upon his lips and no more secrets in his soul about his desires, Maurice, together with Scudder (Alec), achieves what Clive never could: self-possession through truly gay love. For, as Forster once wrote in his “locked diary”: “Love—and affection too—must be opposed to reason if they are genuine” (7).

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grown, so have the possible flaws directly linked to the excessive use of these platforms. A specific term coined for this phenomenon is known as "social media addiction."

Our society discusses the topic of social media addiction often, but through my research process for this article, I've discovered that resources in this area lack abundance. Also, research concerning social media addiction issues can be presented non-objectively, regularly demonizing the platforms. However, I believe combining these studies will offer a definitive conclusion on whether social media platforms inherently damage their users' mind and interpersonal relationships. People who support social networking generally discuss positive effects it has on individuals who lack the ability to interact effectively because of mental illnesses which impact their lives.

In this article, I will discuss both stances concerning social media use and will present methods for addressing the drawbacks inherent in excessive Internet use and how we can reduce them. In reducing these effects, I argue significant opportunities to aid individuals suffering from mental disorders will present themselves and offer them the opportunity to interact with others unhindered by the adverse effects of technology or mental limitations.

## Literature Review

From the research I have conducted regarding this subject matter, I've seen that people associate most social media forms with mostly negative opinions. Authors like Logan Kugler offer prime examples of this distasteful view in his article about technology addiction.

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## Identifying Psychoanalytic

### Danger:

## Social Media and Mental Illness in Modern Society

### Introduction

For many years, people have used social networking sites to establish contact with one another over long distances and maintain existing relationships or occasionally, create new ones. In recent years, social media developers have seen massive growths in their networks as our society expands, introducing users to steadily increasing media distribution sources. However, as this resource's use has

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His piece's core message revolves around how tech developers create products to produce addiction in their users. He focuses on the algorithms incorporated into platforms like Facebook which can learn what advertisements users will show vulnerability towards. Kugler concludes this process is essential to ensure the return and potential site addiction for social networkers.

Audrey Cheak also addresses this unhealthy social media addiction, identifying it as a subset of Internet addiction. Her article's focus is finding a primary link between social media addiction and social anxiety disorder's presence in people who use these platforms. She presents examples correlating with statements Kugler presents in his article concerning extensive social media use, or online gaming sites stating these activities are prime factors for developing social anxiety.

Naomi Whiteside presents arguments akin to Kugler's in her article concerning the helpfulness versus harmfulness of social media sites. In her piece, she acknowledges that since Facebook's creation, researchers have conducted several studies determining the impact social media has on society, however, the piece also mentions recent studies which determined sixty percent of American Internet users had no impact on their relationships. Her article indicates that relationship satisfaction varies based on the type of social media usage, rather than the frequency.

Articles I utilize in this study present their concerns for the potentially damaging effects social media outlets inflict upon their users and provide multiple evidence pieces for it. However, there are outliers like Chandler

McClellan. He turns his attention away from possible causation social media platforms present, instead focusing on the benefits that aid people suffering from mental illnesses including depression or anxiety. McClellan and his colleagues employ an autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) data analysis as a determining method for response levels they received from individuals on Twitter.

## Social Media as Socially Hindering

To gain a general understanding of social media's status, one should first draw their attention towards the current leader, Facebook. Recently it was determined in September 2018 that 2.23 billion monthly active users log into Facebook on average. The company's mission statement follows, "Give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together" (Facebook). This statement serves as a comforting tagline for a marketing campaign, and upon viewing the results, their statement appears truthful, considering how people have grown fond of the platform because it keeps them connected with the people whom they cherish.

However, some factors discredit this notion, including the emergence of addictive behavior and regression in its users' social skills. Also, it is inevitable that sites like Facebook will be hacked in attempts to spread discord among the populace, such as what happened surrounding the 2016 presidential election. Certain Russian non-state actors sought to drive a political wedge between America by creating fake posts on highly divisive issues in attempt to sway opinions near the 2016 election. Kugler states that Facebook

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was the perfect weapon for this task considering that more than half of Americans use it several times each day.

I believe that instances like the hacking in 2016 encourage current beliefs that social media sites have inherent abilities to discourage positive social behavior. There have been many instances where social media has served to disrupt the ties formed in their users' interpersonal relationships. Consequences formed by social media present themselves in Whiteside's article, where she examines nationwide surveys to find a pattern amongst certain groups and determine how social media affects their intimate relationships.

One detail her article draws attention to is the reasoning for the use of social media platforms. She claims the fact that social media offers a platform where users can receive support and encouragement through interactions with friends and family requires adequate attention. Whiteside introduces the "social compensation hypothesis" which suggests people will seek company and support when their undeveloped offline networks prove themselves ineffective. Her article addresses the fact that social media also provides utilitarian benefits. Whiteside mentions that these benefits are present because it allows users to keep up to date with the activities and preferences of friends or other connections. I believe that from this perspective social media proves itself beneficial in positively impacting personal relationships by allowing users to maintain the bonds they create without hindrance.

Unfortunately, these situations are merely the best possible scenario. Referring to

Kugler's claim that technology-based platforms are designed to culminate addictive behavior in their users, the issue of **intrusion** arises. This term is useful for describing the occurrence brought about when individuals fall victim to these platforms' addictive aspects as they become unable to complete daily tasks and hinder relationship functioning. Thus, excessive intrusion may include withdrawal symptoms like extreme distress. This process generally appears in a person's behavior who has become increasingly dissatisfied with their relationships outside the digital framework in which they have grown accustomed. I argue that this concept of retreating to virtual shells is an assured means for developing latent anti-social tendencies that will blossom from dissatisfying encounters.

There have been studies conducted to determine the benefits that social media offers those dealing with relationship issues that inspire behaviors such as these. One theory used to determine this problem is the **uncertainty reduction theory**, which argues that relationships develop when participants can reduce uncertainty about each other and disintegrate when participants are unable to do so. This theory states that increasing the amount of communication with a partner's network will reduce uncertainty and enhance the relationship's stability. This interaction with one's partner potentially demonstrates trust in a healthy relationship. However, there remains the suspicion that either party will partake in this behavior due to anxiety, distrust or a desire for control in the relationship.

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Examining these different addiction aspects offer clear understanding of why social media sites could potentially disassemble the ties that they advertise themselves as strengthening. When taking these criticisms into account, users can examine their behaviors more consciously and potentially avoid the socially detrimental side effects they could develop. The adverse effects that could formulate in the psyche resulting from this behavior such as anxiety and depression are also concerning topics.

## Social Media as Mentally Debilitating

Though social media concerns generally aim at the weakening social ties created between individuals when offline, the more prevalent concern originates in the mental sphere of those who interact with it. People who interact with social media sites may use their preferred platform as a method for interacting with their friends or coping with stress. However, just as these sites can strain existing social ties, the same is possible for users' mental well-being. Examples of this strain can present themselves in individuals with considerably low self-esteem, social anxiety or depression. Some of these detrimental effects are mentioned explicitly by David Brunskill in his chapter on the danger social media poses to the human psyche. The first point introduced is the concept of **image** or more specifically, the symbolic representation of who we are and how we desire others to perceive us. As our culture continues to incorporate social media into more aspects of our society, the issue of authenticity will continue to grow. This issue results from the fact that in attempts to

maintain their flawless image, individuals and companies alike continue to purge negative aspects of their identity from public access.

I argue this substantial lack of authenticity has proven itself as another concern of our current society, though it has been an issue long before social media emerged. However, social media does not appear designed to promote psychological authenticity, as negative material being chosen to represent the self is highly unlikely to see the monitor. People do not need to share the worst aspects of their character unless of course, they feel an urge to humble themselves. This behavior has potential to severely weaken the psyche of social media users because it offers the choice to avoid situations that force them to evaluate their character and discredit themselves further. I believe this lack of self-reflection will gradually pave the way for toxic situations that cannot be escaped in mere seconds by logging off to develop.

The concept of Internet addiction taking root in individuals who suffer from low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression is discussed in Audrey Cheak's article concerning the Internet addiction levels of students. She explores how socially anxious individuals feel that everyone is judging and staring at them although rationally they are aware that it is false. This behavior is problematic because it causes seclusion from people once held as close friends and encourages the growth of intrusion and addiction risk. I claim that the common theme shared by these pieces is the concept of isolation either resulting from increased or a misplaced sense of **identity** appearing in users. These subjects will never feel truly

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comfortable in public should these effects somehow take hold of them. This concept offers more urgency to the need for self-reflection and identification of the drawbacks inherent in social media as doing so will aid the mental well-being of our society.

## Social Media as Therapeutic

These researchers' arguments are concerning and as a responsible society, we should heed these warnings with caution and seek to improve upon the flaws that are accompanied by social media use. I believe this step is essential for our society to identify the potential benefits these platforms offer our mentally disabled citizens. While it is apparent that social media sites have flaws that are capable of interfering with the mental development of many individuals who partake in their use, there has also been significant research conducted in determining how they present opportunities for those living with certain disorders to successfully interact with society unhindered. Researchers have devoted their time to developing solutions to aid these minorities, including individuals such as Chandler McClellan. This author focuses on platforms such as Twitter for this exact reasoning.

Using these sites presents individuals with limited influence in their offline networks more solutions to aid those whom they wish to support. Twitter was especially useful in McClellan's analysis because the level of ease afforded by the "hashtag" system the site implements allows users to identify keywords related to their queries. This system allows people seeking immediate support with their disorders to alleviate symptoms of depression

or anxiety and offers the chance to establish stable support groups. He employs the use of Twitter to analyze mental health discussions in his article analyzing mental health patterns with social media. His method includes the analysis of numerous tweets from 2011 to 2014 to develop an empirical model to predict communication trends about depression and suicide. By analyzing these periods of activity concerning mental health, he develops greater chances to identify problems through the massive lens of social media sites like Twitter.

This system has also proven its effectiveness in allowing medical practitioners to re-evaluate the methods in which they communicate with their patients whom they diagnose. Participants showed concern over a loss of their sense of self following their face-to-face diagnosis. It is understandable that individuals who do not consider themselves to be mentally restricted would demonstrate feelings of distress if health practitioners presented their results thoughtlessly. This re-evaluative aspect is another reason that social media should be considered in the field of treatment to aid participants involved in these scenarios. Using social media as a platform to aid them in their struggles is the area where its practicality is made apparent and allows more significant opportunities for our society to evolve.

## Discussion

Many of these concerns focus on the interpersonal impacts that users will continue to experience so perhaps a possible solution to this aspect would be to encourage users not to spend too much time on their sites. This encouragement method has been utilized on

television channels and streaming services and even in particular video game titles. Creators who implement this feature are aware of the pleasurable experiences that their products afford them but are also concerned with the potential negative impact their users can receive. It is possible that social media developers are unwilling to partake in this action because they are entirely dependent on the time that users interact with their products. Despite this possibility, there is always a chance that companies will eventually make moral decisions if they are pressured into doing so when unable to make these decisions themselves. Should this latter option be accurate, then the responsibility first falls to us as citizens to continue to push for regulation until said platforms are willing to conform.

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## The Graveyard Excursion: Wordsworth and the Sympathetic Imagination

Since its publication in 1814, critics have ridiculed Wordsworth's *Excursion* for "reveal[ing] a progressive impoverishment and exhaustion of ideas" as the great poet recoils from his humanistic nature myth and affirms a Christian world-view (Bostetter 14). Criticisms focus on the failure of both the Wanderer's Natural Supernaturalism and the Pastor's orthodox Christianity to resolve the Solitary's doubts about the meaning of life. As a whole,

*The Excursion* dramatizes the conflict between imaginative stasis and imaginative process in the individual's drive to understand the injustices of human experience, including death. The Wanderer, an aging pedlar and embodiment of natural wisdom, is on a mission to teach the young Poet/narrator "to read the forms of things . . . with a [worthy] eye" during a walking tour of the Lake District (1.940). They encounter the Solitary, whose misfortunes in life have led to imaginative despair. The Wanderer struggles to convince his friend to turn to nature and reconnect with the divinity of the natural world. However, having failed in this effort at the end of Book 4, he turns to a country Pastor for help. While colored with Christian hope, the graveyard excursion (Books 5-7) shifts the focus from the healing properties of nature to the potential of the sympathetic imagination to restore the fallen soul by displacing the burden of self-consciousness through the individual's interconnectedness with the entirety of human kind. Far from a regression to orthodoxy, the final books of *The Excursion* celebrate the "excursive power" of the imagination to reinvigorate the fallen psyche and reconcile the individual to both nature and society.

The Solitary's despair derives from the failure of the French Revolution and the tragic deaths of his young wife and children. For the Solitary, life is "fashioned like an ill-constructed tale" that begins hopefully but ends with "diminished grace" (5.432, 434). All of the "glowing phrases" that promise hope for the future are meaningless when placed "in sober contrast with reality and man's substantial life" (5.244-249). Has any man, he

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questions, been “preserved from [the] . . . shocks of contradiction” by the strength of his Christian faith? Hitting on themes from their conversation the day before, the Wanderer presses the Pastor for more answers: Are we children of hope? Are we creatures of good or evil? Does the beauty of life necessarily diminish with age? Is virtue a “living power” or merely a fiction? Is it true that death is the only recompense for the pains of this life? While the Pastor admits that we are incapable of complete self-knowledge and understanding, he affirms that those who have faith will see life “replete with vivid promise” while those who don’t will find it “cheerless” and “forbidding” (5.556-557). Dissatisfied with this reply, the Wanderer turns to the “sepulchral stones” of the graves at their feet, asking the Pastor to resolve their doubts “with authentic epitaphs; and so, not reaching higher [toward God], we may learn to prize the breath we share with humankind; And look upon the dust of man with awe” (5.651-657).

As the meeting ground of Death and Life, the graveyard and the epitaphs therein reflect a collective conflict with transience and individuals’ responses to this immutable fact. As Wordsworth notes in his first “Essay upon Epitaphs,” the epitaph acts as a mediator between life and death by introducing the subject “through its mediation to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all” (PW 5.454). The unifying effect of the grave is to lead the subject to understand that “what is peculiar to the individual shall still be subordinate to a sense of what he has in common with the species” (SP 365). As the Wanderer explains, though each individual

dies, his or her life enables an “ascent and progress in the main” (7.1005). Even with their orthodox themes, the Pastor’s tales inadvertently affirm the Solitary’s claim that life is the story of “poor humanity’s afflicted will struggling in vain with ruthless destiny” (5.556-557). However, as these stories of human pathos proceed, the status of a providential absolute who allows if not “wills” misery in our lives diminishes as the admiration of human endurance ascends, posing a “reverence for the dust of man” (7.1057) as a potential source of salvation.

The first three graveyard stories involve individuals remembered for their virtuous characteristics in spite of their personal weaknesses and failures. An herb-gatherer’s steadfastness to the two women who destroy him redeems his thralldom to the same. A determined miner strikes it rich after twenty years but proves “unable to support the weight of [his] fortune” and squanders it into an early grave (6.237-238). The people of Grasmere, however, commemorate him for his “perseverance” to the “darksome center of a consistent hope,” not his fall from grace (6.249). A “frivolous youth,” who like the prodigal son squandered his fortune three times, remains a “slave” to the “contradictions” of his character until his untimely demise. Nonetheless, his sincere death-bed apology for the disgrace he brought upon his family assuages the tragedy of his wanton life and early death (6.374-375). While these epitaphs underscore how one positive characteristic can minimize our personal weaknesses in the memory of others, the next set explores the “ill-

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fated” lives of characters straightened by circumstances beyond their control.

The stories of two mothers emphasize the necessity of empathy for victims of social injustice and the importance of human connection. In the first, a “death-doomed” woman illustrates the dangers of alienating oneself from human comfort and society. Undisclosed circumstances in her early-married life, coupled with the “weakness of her sex,” led to her “dire dependence” on outside forces for survival. Resolving never to be dependent on anyone again, she closes her heart to human charity and companionship to nurse two “degenerate passions: an “avaricious thrift” and a “thralldom of maternal love” (6.706-710). Every penny earned she uses to indulge her son, who repays her devotion with a life of shameful debauchery. When she suddenly falls ill, her sole “vexation” is that someone else would “rule and reign sole mistress of this house when I am gone” (6.754-755). Remarkably, she transcends her solipsism on her death-bed, reaching out to nature and acknowledging her shared fate with humankind: “that glorious star . . . will shine as it now shines when **we** are laid in earth and safe from all **our** sorrows” (6.763-766, my emphasis).

The story told at the grave of the “hapless Ellen” is one of a “weeping Magdalene” who is relentlessly plagued by bad luck. As a young girl, Ellen finds herself pregnant and abandoned by the man she loves. Although in despair, once her baby is born, she regains her sense of self and spirit as she devotes her life to her infant. Unfortunately, circumstances gather like clouds around the

tiny family, and Ellen obtains domestic work from a cruel master who forbade contact with her own child. The child died, and a flood destroyed Ellen’s home, leaving her with nothing but a strict determination “to find peace and pleasure in endurance” (6.1026-27). Ellen spends the rest of her life in shame, blaming her youthful indiscretion for the punishment God has sanctioned. In spite of her tragedy, Ellen’s faith remains intact: “he who afflicts me knows what I can bear; and when I fail, and can endure no more, will mercifully take me unto himself” (6.1046-1048). On its surface, Ellen’s tragedy, as the young Poet acknowledges, seems only to mock human dignity and reveal the injustice of God’s providential plan. However, as the diverse group stands impotently by considering Ellen’s story, each is united in his sympathy for this poor doomed girl: The “downcast looks . . . made known that each had listened with his inmost heart” and shared in Ellen’s pain (6.1053-1054). Like the story of Margaret in “The Ruined Cottage,” Book 1 of *The Excursion*, Ellen’s story arouses empathy for the “secret spirit of humanity” that endures in spite of unfathomable suffering. Representing the plight of many young women who fell into temptation out of wedlock, Ellen’s misery is disproportionate to her indiscretion. What is significant, however, is the moment of unity the men experience as they share the pain of another.

The graveyard excursion closes with “two tales that link Grasmere with the wider world.” Here Wordsworth juxtaposes the transience of each individual to the “selfless acts of heroism and care for fellow human

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beings” (Noyes 160) that immortalize human potential through time and space. The first story is of a poor but patriotic youth who joined the recent fight against the “boastful tyrant Napoleon,” only to lose his life in an act of sacrifice and bravery. At his well-attended funeral, even “the distant mountains echoed with a sound of lamentation, never heard before” as he was buried with a soldier’s honors (7.889-890). An example of how the common can rise to greatness, the youth remains an inspiration to the folks of Grasmere who keep his story alive. The second tale is of Sir Alfred Irthing, an Elizabethan knight who upon retirement moved into the “sequestered” parish to live out his life quietly. Though hailed for his years of “redressing” the wrongs “of all who suffer,” only the “faithless memorial” of his tombstone and his family name among some cottagers remain (7.1042-1044, 976-978). As these two characters reminds us, mortality is the great equalizer between the low and the mighty as “from their spheres the stars of human glory are cast down . . . withered and consumed” (7.976-982). However, while the individual’s experience will always seem “disproportioned to the hopes and expectations of the self-flattering mind,” “the vast frame of social nature” is ever expanding in a process of becoming (7.1006-1007).

The central theme of the graveyard excursion is that by revealing the commonality and range of human experience, the grave teaches “reverence for the dust of man” (7.1057). As Hamilton writes, “to pronounce an epitaph is to declare a beginning as well as an end, and with the conclusion of each ‘authentic epitaph’ [in *The Excursion*], there is

once more the recovery of a beginning as the poem gets underway again” (143). As such, the poem ironizes death as a becoming as each individual’s life enables “an ascent in the main” (7.1005). Acclaimed scholar Geoffrey Hartman argues *The Excursion* fails because “it ends with the main disputant (the Solitary) still unregenerate, and with the issue of renovation unresolved after nine books” (290-291); however, this time he misses the point. The primary transformation or renovation occurs not in the Solitary but in the young Poet as he embraces the power of the imagination to reconcile his doubts about the injustices of life. Thus, in lieu of sacrificing his Romanticism to an orthodox faith in a providential God, Wordsworth sanctions the sympathetic imagination, “the mind’s excursive power,” as the force by which “we build up the Being that we are” (4.1263-64).

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## **Redefining Fairy Tales and the Effect They Have on Modern Society:**

### **How Nationalism and the American Dream Were Altered by Disneyfication**

It is no secret that the popular style of books and movie productions has changed with different generations. We hear the phrase "fairy tale" and initially think of prince charming, Cinderella, and happily ever after, but why is this? Why is it that we have narrowed the genre to such an extent that we no longer view older stories, such as the Grimm Brothers' tales, as fairy tales but rather as something darker and cruel? The stories we grow up with as adolescents can ultimately shape our view of

life as an adult, whether we realize it or not. These films and books have come to leave us with unobtainable expectations of this world that we are forced to contend with later in life.

Most modern fairy tales are adaptations taken from years of retelling much older stories. These older stories typically had a very different ending than we have become accustomed to today. They held no quarrels in showing the darker intentions and hardships of humanity. Whereas, in today's society, fairy tales are portrayed as a type of utopian life style we struggle to obtain. We have created an entirely new process of writing that is coming to be known as "Disneyfication".

Stories have been rewritten and retold for longer than we have records of it, but none became quite as historically significant as when Walt Disney released his first full-length animated motion picture *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*. This release started a new tradition in the method of writing fairy tales. In the older tales, we learn valuable life lessons. We are taught that there are repercussions for wrong actions, anyone can occasionally be led astray, and even families do not always stay loyal to one another. These are hard truths, but they are true, nonetheless. So, what then are we to take from modern fairy tales? If they are not to warn us of the future or give us caution and guidance to the hardships of this world, why was this historical shift necessary? Walt Disney's productions, while being spread throughout the world, are known to Americanize their tales. *Snow White* was released in 1938 toward the ending of The Great Depression. In such a time of need in America, it is clear to see why stories of

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heroines and hope would be so widely accepted and sought after. When taking this into account, a possible intention for these stories becomes clear, and can be explained in this statement made by Alexandra Heatwole: “The Disney fairy tale, like all speculative fictions, opened a door — but this door was not to a possible alternate present or future, but to a possible alternate history in which the scars of American history, including those of racial genocide and Civil and World Wars, could be washed away, restoring the innocence of a mythical national childhood: ‘an imaginary time in an imaginary past’ (Tavin and Anderson 22)” (Heatwole 1). If these tales are not to influence the *future* of our nation, it is possible they were desired to forget our harsh past and give hope to a struggling nation.

Regardless of whether Disney’s intention was to mold a new history and society in America, that is the effect that came about. Not only was the timing of *Snow White’s* release during a crucial time in our history, but every release after it as well. On September twenty-second of 1949, President Truman announced the detonation of the first atomic bomb by the Soviet Union. Shortly afterwards, on March fourth, 1950 Walt Disney productions released *Cinderella*. This parallel in a national occurrence shortly being followed by a Disney film release continues to today. It is in such times as these, during national tragedy and hardship, that we see America come together in support and a spirit of nationalism. Combine the current heartache in America, coupled with the temporary unity and support it brings us, throw in films of hope and happy endings, and you will get the “American

Dream”. The illusion of the “American Dream” is the belief by the citizens of our country that not only did they have the ability to, but they were expected to get a job, buy a house, have and support a family, and live the perfect “white picket fence” lifestyle. This idea was further enforced by Walt Disney’s productions modeling this same lifestyle to children, who then grew up wishing to replicate it. Disney’s importance in this transition is stated by Dr. Tracey Mollet: “Walt Disney’s productions are now being seen as crucial to the construction of modern American society through his contribution to the formation of a new United States nationalism” (110).

Due to the surpassing monopoly of stories of this new genre, we are forced to confront its lasting effect on American society today. By altering stories in this way, we have forgotten the need to learn from our history. In a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, Dr. Ray Bender shares his thoughts on this loss of the older fairy tale: “The child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim once said that ‘much can be learned from fairy tales about the inner problems of human beings, and of the right solutions to their predicaments.’ I would suggest that Disney’s sweetening of fairy tales represents as great a literary travesty as anything done to Hugo” (Bender). This “sweetening” of tales would have us to believe that everything will always turn out well in the end and that evil will always be defeated, but it is a lie we have concocted for ourselves to distract us and lessen the pain of a harsh reality.

Children and adolescents of impressionable age are the primary audience of these films. They

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grow up wanting to be a super hero and save the world or perhaps a princess waiting for her one true love to rescue her and live “happily ever after”. We let them believe the lie of this possibility, because we do not wish to burden them with the hardships that we bear. Then, once reaching the age of adulthood, we see a generation lost for they have no knowledge of the inner workings of this world. Where hope is a critical aspect in the development of future leaders and world changers, it has come time in this nation that we need the aid of the fairy tales of old to teach us this missing critical knowledge of life.

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## ACETA Elects New Steering Committee Members

During the business meeting held on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, ACETA members elected new officers to the Steering Committee. The following individuals will begin their service immediately.

- ❖ Vice-President: Anissa Graham, University of North Alabama
- ❖ Executive Secretary: Ashley Harlan Kitchens, Jefferson State Community College
- ❖ Emerging Scholar (Student Member): Donovan Cleckley
- ❖ 4-Year Institution Member-at-Large: Eric Sterling, Auburn University at Montgomery
- ❖ Two-Year Institution Member-at-Large: Jamie King, Jefferson State Community College