

SPECTRUM



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The Online Journal of
the Writing Across the Curriculum Pilot Program
at SUNY College at Old Westbury

Volume 1, Spring 2014

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Credits and Acknowledgements

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We gratefully acknowledge the work of the students, faculty, and staff who have participated in the Writing across the Curriculum Pilot Program, including Dr. Jody Cardinal, the Director of the Writing Center and Professors Catherine Bernard, Jacqueline Emery, John Friedman, Amanda Frisken, Diane Hopkins, Lillian Park, Stephanie Schneider, and Judith Walsh who taught the writing intensive courses that prompted the papers in this volume.

About the Writing Across the Curriculum Pilot Program

Each semester, the Writing across the Curriculum Pilot Program coordinates a series of writing intensive courses offered by departments from across the SUNY College at Old Westbury campus. The courses boast small class sizes and a focus on writing that helps to engage students in learning, cultivate writing and thinking abilities, and support academic and career goals. The Pilot Program also provides writing intensive instructor training, makes available writing resources for students, and offers writing across the curriculum resources to all faculty members at the college.

Spectrum

Volume 1, Spring 2014

Contents

	1	Letter from the Editor
<i>Alexa Bauman</i>	3	<i>Persepolis: An Upper Class Standing Does Not Mean an Escape from Tragedy</i>
<i>Lisa Casazza</i>	7	Instruction Commentary Based on Cooperating Teacher's Lesson
<i>Alex Filippone</i>	13	Rauschenberg and Dada
<i>Tanya Germain</i>	14	The Correlation Between Social Hierarchy and Social Dominance
<i>Donna Makar</i>	16	<i>Signs of Existence: Biotech Art at the Amelie A. Wallace Gallery</i>
<i>Megan Murphy</i>	18	Reading Between the Lines: Ideas of Liberty and Emerging Social Equality in the Letters of William Eddis
<i>Traci Newman</i>	27	Hair Addiction
<i>Niel Quinn</i>	30	19th Century Midterm
<i>Jessica Spero</i>	33	Math Lesson Plan
<i>Eddy Walsh</i>	35	A Comparison of Pablo Picasso and Robert Motherwell
<i>Justine N. Wilson</i>	37	Writer's Statement

Letter from the Editor

S*pectrum* is the online journal of the Writing Across the Curriculum Pilot Program. The Writing Across the Curriculum Pilot Program is composed of writing intensive courses offered by departments from across the SUNY College at Old Westbury campus and is coordinated by Dr. Margaret Rose Torrell.

This first volume of *Spectrum* displays an array of writing from students who excelled in cultivating their writing, creativity, critical thinking, and engagement in learning. The first paper “*Persepolis: An Upper Class Standing Does not Mean an Escape from Tragedy*,” written by Alexa Bauman in Dr. Jacqueline Emery’s Literature Across Cultures I, explores the memoir *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi that is told in the format of a graphic novel.

Lisa Casazza’s paper “Instruction Commentary Based on Cooperating Teacher’s Lesson” was written in her education class with Dr. Stephanie Schneider. Next, Alex Filippone writes about Robert Rauschenberg as a Neo Dada artist from Visual Culture: Warhol to Present, a course taught by Dr. Catherine Bernard.

“The Correlation Between Social Hierarchy and Social Dominance,” by Tanya Germain, was written in Dr. Lillian Park’s The Psychology of Prejudice and examines the relationship of those who hold power positions in society and feel a greater sense of entitlement.

In Professor John Friedman’s Advanced Reporting and News Writing, Donna Makar praises the art show *Signs of Existence: Biotech Art* at the Amelie A. Wallace Gallery that highlights the consequence of the Earth’s ecosystems for human advancement within three topics: genetic analysis, the health of our ecosystem, and human anatomy.

Megan Murphy wrote the paper: “Reading Between the Lines: Ideas of Liberty and Emerging Social Equality in the Letters of William Eddis,” in Dr. Amanda Frisken’s Early America class. Murphy explores the socioeconomic hierarchy of Maryland in the early 1770s

through the letters of William Eddis.

Traci Newman comically illustrates her desire to obtain straight hair in “Hair Addiction,” written in Professor John Friedman’s Advanced Reporting and News Writing Class. Niel Quinn’s “19th Century Midterm” was written in Professor Judith Walsh’s History course.

From the Education Department, Jessica Spero presents her “Math Lesson Plan,” written in Professor Diane Hopkins’s class. Eddy Walsh compares Pablo Picasso and Robert Motherwell in a paper written in Dr. Catherine Bernard’s Visual Culture: Warhol to Present class.

Finally, Justine N. Wilson’s “Writer’s Statement,” written in Dr. Jacqueline Emery’s Native American Literature, is a reflection of her skills as a writer and the transformation she underwent as she learned the importance of revision.

Thank you to the students and faculty who worked together to create the thought-provoking writing featured in the very first volume of *Spectrum*!

- Naomi Johnson, *editor*

Persepolis: An Upper Class Standing Does Not Mean an Escape from Tragedy

Alexa Bauman

Literature Across Cultures I • Fall 2013

Persepolis is a memoir by Marjane Satrapi that is told in the format of a graphic novel. This showcases a clear talent for both drawing and writing. *Persepolis* mainly focuses on the conflicts involving the Iranian revolution and how it personally affected Satrapi and her family. It is her personal story to share with a western world, because she believes “that an entire nation should not be judged by the wrongdoings of a few extremists” (Introduction). In his review of the graphic novel, Saba argues that her graphic novel “dumbs down” the situation in Iran because it is through her point of view, instead of a historical approach. He states the reason for the inaccuracies is because Satrapi is an “over-privileged young woman who found the Islamic revolution and the war with Iraq as impediments to the full enjoyment of her family vacation in Italy and Spain.” This could not be further from the truth, because Satrapi continually stresses the impact the war has had on her family, friends, and personal freedoms. This all takes an emotional toll on her and she does not feel at home in her own country.

Marji has never tried to hide the fact that her family was from the upper class, but it does not minimize its struggles. As a young child, she is seen feeling uncomfortable about her social status, stating, “I finally understood why I felt ashamed to sit in my father’s Cadillac” (Satrapi 33). She is aware that she is a member of the upper class but does not feel empowered because of it – rather, it seems to do just the opposite. She feels uncomfortable to be living in luxury while others are suffering through war and poverty. And even though

her family was wealthy, it could not stop the regime from killing its members. Marji's uncle Anoosh was executed by the Islamic regime on suspicion of being a Russian spy. Marji is so devastated by his death that she orders for her representation of God to "get out of her life" (Satrapi 70). In a sense, she is rejecting her religion because she cannot believe that her God would have let her family member die at the hands of the regime. This is an extremely difficult situation for any family to deal with, especially for a young child who has a strong bond with her uncle. If Marji was too privileged to care about the revolution, then why would she have to go through a tragedy such as her uncle's execution by the government?

Marji was also affected by the other close people in her life, such as friends and neighbors, who suffered due to the revolution, despite her social class. Children in Iran were taught to glamorize dying in war for a good cause and Marji was no exception. The father of one of her classmates, Pardisse, was an Iranian bomber who helped attack Baghdad and died as a result. When Marji tried to console her by saying that her dad "acted like a genuine hero," Pardisse responds, "I wish he were alive and in jail than dead and a hero" (Satrapi 86). Pardisse's words brought the gravity of the situation to Marji, where a hero is not as glorious as the government wants its people to believe. It brought awareness to the propaganda released by the government in order to make the killings seem justified. In addition, Marji was also forced to witness the aftermath of a bombing of her neighbor's home, where it is heavily implied that she saw a severed arm in the rubble (Satrapi 142). Such an image certainly has the power to scar a child for life. For the people Iran, the horrors of war violence were right in their neighborhoods, which had once been a safe place. Marji's own life was in danger due to the war, and anyone who experiences war so close to home would want it to be stopped. Surrounded by all of these happenings, Marji was forced to grow up quickly and prematurely ended her childhood. Even though her family was wealthy, they could not end the violence that surrounded them.

Another reason why the Iranian revolution and war truly had a significant impact on Marji is because it intruded on her personal freedoms. It is clear to see throughout the graphic novel that she is a free-spirited young woman. She follows American trends, as evident by her listening to Michael Jackson, and is not afraid to speak up against those in authority. When her teacher tells her class that Iran no longer keeps political prisoners, Marji stands up and demands, “How dare you lie to us like that?” Her mother berates her once she finds out, stressing how it was an unsafe action to take and could result in her being executed one day (Satrapi 145). As a result, Marji is sent to Vienna by her parents to continue her education. This may seem like an example of Marji’s family having greater wealth and entitlement, but the fact is that she is still being separated from her parents at the age of fourteen because of the Iranian revolution. This is not an ordinary situation for many children and causes distress and depression for Marji. It is not a “European family vacation,” but sending her away for her safety.

Because she is sent to Vienna due to the revolution, Marji is unable to identify with her home country when she returns to Iran. She spent a large portion of her adolescence in Vienna, away from her parents and home, and returned once she was an adult. She feels a strange disconnect because she wasn’t sure where should belong, especially after having avoided war for the past few years. Marji tells her therapist, “When I was in Vienna, my life didn’t matter to anyone and that obviously had an effect on my own self-esteem... I thought that in coming back to Iran, this would change... I have no drive” (Satrapi 271). These feelings eventually drive her to attempt suicide. Surely swallowing a whole bottle of anti-depressants in an attempt to end one’s life is not a sign of privilege. This illustrates the severity of the emotional distress the Iranian war and revolution causes on one girl’s psyche, even if she was not personally fighting in the physical battles. This illustrates her genuine concern and wanting to be involved in the war’s events, as well as her guilt about being away for

a large portion of the war.

Therefore, just because Marji's family held a higher social status than others does not mean that the revolution was seen as "petty" to her. Marji has clearly suffered through attempting to come of age throughout the graphic novel with a backdrop of terrible political violence. It is unfair to assume that she is insensitive to these issues because of her social standing. Unfortunately, Saba seems to have missed the point in Satrapi's graphic novel, which was to bring a greater understanding of Iran to the western world through her own point of view. It is certainly ironic that Satrapi wanted to eliminate stereotypes and judgments regarding Iranians, and was thus criticized solely on her social standing by another Iranian.

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Instruction Commentary Based on Cooperating Teacher's Lesson

Lisa Casazza

Student Observation and Practicum • Fall 2013

What Do I Need to Do?

• *Observe your cooperating teacher instructing and engaging students in literacy learning. The central focus should support students to develop an essential literacy strategy and the requisite skills for comprehending or composing text in meaningful contexts.*

What Do I Need to Write?

Provide your response to each of the prompts below:

1. Lesson Description

Describe the lesson you observed. Include the following:

- *What were the objectives? Consider the knowledge, skills, and dispositions your cooperating teacher wants students to have as a result of this lesson.*
- *What instructional strategies and learning tasks did the teacher use in the lesson to support diverse students?*
- *What formal and informal assessments were used to monitor student learning?*
- *What instructional resources and materials were used to engage students in learning?*

The lesson I observed was on Wednesday, September 4, 2013. This lesson was completed for a third grade class. After listening to the cooperating teacher read aloud a chapter in the book, *Malcolm at Midnight*, the students were able to understand how to compare and contrast the literary characters Malcolm and Snip by collaboratively completing a Venn diagram. During the prediction and the brainstorming

activity the students will further develop their oral (expressive) language skills while the read aloud allows the students to develop their listening (receptive) language skills. The students will continue to practice using proper syntax and discourse which in turn will strengthen their language and communication skills.

The instructional strategy the teacher used was utilizing a Venn diagram. While brainstorming for answers, the teacher modeled the proper way to complete the graphic organizer. Teacher modeling is a great way to integrate multiple means of representation. The teacher modeling research based strategy will allow the teacher to reach all the students during the lesson. Modeling engages students who are visual learners, auditory learners and tactile learners. By utilizing the Venn diagram, the teacher is utilizing visual support that can encourage the student's engagement. The student in the class who is classified as learning disabled benefits from the read aloud and group brainstorming because he is able to listen to the story and express himself without the pressure of reading.

The teacher informally assessed the students by observing them during the brainstorming and during the group work completing the Venn diagram. As a formal assessment the teacher will collect the Venn diagram the students will complete for homework. They must compare and contrast themselves to one of the characters in today's story.

2. Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

Describe parts in the lesson where the cooperating teacher provided a positive learning environment.

•How did the cooperating teacher demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning. Be sure to cite specific examples to support your statements.

The teacher reads aloud a chapter or two of *Malcolm at Midnight* during the student's

morning snack time. The teacher starts the lesson asking questions of the prior readings to assess if the students remember and comprehend the story thus far. The teacher then hands out different colored post it notes to the students. Based on their review of the previous chapters, the teacher will have the students make their own predictions of the upcoming chapter. The students place their post it notes on the board to review after the lesson. This is a great way for the students to relax and become engaged in the lesson while they listen to see if any of their predictions come true during the reading. The teacher listens and respects all of the students' predictions and brainstorming ideas.

The student with the learning disability was very excited during the prediction and brainstorming time and started to call out all of his answers. The teacher is very responsive to his needs and explains to him that she is very happy to see that he has so many answers but we have to be fair to the rest of the class and allow everyone to come up with answers. She told him every time he shouts an answer out loud his answers float through the air and go into someone's ear giving them his answers. He must try his best to raise his hand and not scream out the answers even if he is excited.

3. Engaging Students in Learning

Refer to examples from the observed lesson in your explanations.

a. Explain how your cooperating teacher's instruction engaged students in developing an essential literacy strategy and requisite skills.

The lesson was motivating and engaging for all of the students. During the prediction and the brainstorming activities, there were several students who were eager to participate. The cooperating teacher made sure to call on the students who were not actively participating. She explained to the students that "there are no wrong answers" and she encouraged all the students to "put on their thinking caps and come up with an answer." She did not finish with this activity until all eleven students came up with an answer.

These activities highlight examples of the students and the teacher engaging in whole group discussions. This strategy allows the teacher to provide necessary content while also seeking student responses to questions. It also requires the students to be actively listening to the teacher during the reading as well as their peers during the brainstorming activity in order to meaningfully contribute to the discussion.

Another way the teacher kept the students engaged was by adding a bit of humor to the reading. The teacher changed the sound of her voice when reading the lines of several different literary characters. This is a fun strategy that keeps the students actively listening throughout the lesson.

b. Describe how your cooperating teacher's instruction linked students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.

This lesson links with the student's prior knowledge by first reviewing the prior chapters that have been read. The teacher asked several questions about the past chapters and the characteristics of several of the characters. The lesson also links with the student's prior knowledge by brainstorming together to complete the Venn diagram. This is an effective research based instructional strategy that helps the students retrieve background information on the characters in the story. The students must use their prior knowledge of each character in order to successfully complete the Venn diagram.

4. Deepening Student Learning during Instruction

Refer to examples from the observed lesson in your explanations.

a. Explain how your cooperating teacher elicited student responses to promote thinking and apply the literacy strategy using requisite skills to comprehend or compose text

One language function that is essential for the students to learn is the ability to make predictions. The cooperating teacher encouraged all the students to come up with a

prediction of what they thought would happen in today's chapter. Each student wrote their predictions on a post it note and placed it on the board for review at the end of the class. This allows the students to practice their written language skill which requires use of proper syntax.

Another strategy utilized that allowed the students to use their comprehension skills was during the read aloud. The teacher was stopping frequently to ask questions about the text as well as identifying new vocabulary word. This allows the student to understand and comprehend the text being read to them.

The cooperating teachers brainstorming strategy was very effective while completing the Venn diagram. This allows the students to critically think and facilitate responses that support understanding of how to compare and contrast two different literary characters.

b. Explain how your cooperating teacher supported students to apply the literacy strategy in a meaning-based context.

The cooperating teacher supported the students' development through modeling and group work. Rather than having the students complete the Venn diagram on their own, the teacher took the time to explain how to compare and contrast the literary character. She gave an example for each of the sections and explained how she came up with her answers.

The cooperating teacher supported the students' development by eliciting responses from the students regarding their background knowledge of the literary story. They are up to chapter 6 in the story so the students have plenty of background knowledge of the character in the story.

5. Analyzing Teaching

Refer to examples from the observed lesson in your explanations.

a. How did your cooperating teacher's instruction support learning for the whole class and students who need greater support or challenge?

(Consider the variety of learners in the class who may require different learning strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

My cooperating teacher's instruction supported learning for the whole class. The teacher chose to read aloud to the class because it benefits struggling readers as well as gifted learners. The student who struggles with reading is able to comprehend the story because the teacher stops to verbalize the thinking process that takes place during reading. The teacher also explained and modeled how to complete the Venn diagram. Teaching modeling is a great way to integrate multiple means of representation. Modeling and utilizing graphic organizers such as the Venn diagram engages students who are visual learners, auditory learners and tactile learners. The prediction and the Venn diagram activities afford each student the opportunity to reach their full individual potential while learning from and supporting their peers.

b. What changes would you make to your cooperating teacher's instruction to better support student learning of the central focus (e.g., missed opportunities)? Why do you think these changes would improve student learning? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning and principles from theory and/or research as appropriate.

If I taught this learning segment to the same group of students, there are few changes that I would make in order to improve the learning of these students. One improvement I would recommend would be to go over the new vocabulary words before the reading. With the knowledge of the new vocabulary, the students will be able to comprehend the story as the teacher is reading. Since the teacher does not have to stop during the reading to explain new vocabulary there will not be a break in the fluidity which can impact comprehension which would put the student with a learning disability at a disadvantage.

Rauschenberg and Dada

Alex Filippone

Visual Culture: Warhol to Present • Fall 2013

Robert Rauschenberg was classified as a Neo Dada artist. He is also considered an artist that helped to bridge the gap between Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. Neo Dada is considered a resurgence of the ideas of Dada, a movement that traveled from Zurich, Switzerland, after World War I, to New York. Rauschenberg's work *The Bed*, 1955, made use of the idea of readymade art, popularized by a Dada artist named Duchamp.

Rauschenberg's work was a combination of mediums, called "combines." He incorporated the ideas of assemblage, readymade and more traditional methods such as oil on canvas. Dr. Delahoyde of Washington State University defines assemblage as the use of "found objects, fragments and bits, often everyday manufactured materials or junk never intended as art materials." This method, as well as Duchamp's idea of readymade can be seen in *Bed* by Rauschenberg. Readymade was a term invented by Marcel Duchamp. It was used to describe "the mass-produced objects he chose, bought and subsequently designated as art" (Archer 12). Rauschenberg's multi medium work is made up of a bed, sheets, pillow and quilt attached to a piece of canvas, splattered with paint, standing upright. The application of the paint resembles that of Jackson Pollock, an Abstract Expressionist. The paint is applied loosely and without precision. Robert Rauschenberg uses the bed as the readymade foundation for his work to expand from. His "combine" also shows the interconnectivity of art and life.

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The Correlation Between Social Hierarchy and Social Dominance

Tanya Germain

The Psychology of Prejudice • Fall 2013

It is no strange phenomenon that those who are higher up on the social ladder feel a greater sense of entitlement. Whether this entitlement means they feel obligated to receive better treatment, or that they feel as though they can discriminate against those that hold lower positions than do they, there is a correlation between social hierarchy and social dominance. In an article written by Tessa Cheek, the construct of “workplace bullying” is explored. While the common belief might be that the aggressors are usually men targeting female subordinates, in this instance, both the aggressors and victims happen to be women. Cheek states that approximately 80% of the time, women who are bullies choose other women as their adversaries. This type of prejudice can be attributed to the *Social Dominance Orientation*. This idea states that there exists a desire by members of the ingroup to dominate members of the outgroup as a result of feeling superior to them. In this case, there is an *opposition to equality*, where members of the more socially dominating group (women in higher work positions) feel as though groups at the bottom (their workplace subordinates) ought to remain there.

In a research study conducted by Guimond in 2003, the concept of *Social Dominance Orientation* was further explored. The study took two experimental groups and randomly assigned them to different work positions. Half of the participants were assigned to be “directors,” a position with great accountability. The other half were assigned to the position of “receptionist,” which did not involve much responsibility. The groups were then asked to

rate members of either their French ingroup members or North Africans, who happened to be members of the outgroup. The researchers hypothesized that as a result of the correlation between social hierarchy and social dominance, those assigned to be “directors” would view the outgroup more harshly than those assigned merely to the position of “receptionist.” The results from the study did in fact support the research hypothesis. There existed a larger discrepancy between the attitudes towards members of the outgroup when the participants were “directors.” That is to say, participants assigned to be “directors” had more unfavorable attitudes towards their north African counterparts. For those participants that were “receptionists,” there was not much of a discrepancy between favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards both members of the outgroup and ingroup. That is to say, the “receptionist” group expressed a similar amount of favorability towards French people and North African people. This study supports the idea that the higher up on the social ladder one is, the more socially dominant that person feels, hence, their attitudes and behaviors towards members of the outgroup are more harsh.

Much like in the study conducted by Guimond, the article by Cheek explores a similar paradigm. Women who are higher up in the workplace are harsher towards their female subordinates as a result of feeling more socially dominant. As Cheek articulates, when it comes time for evaluations and promotions, it seems as though the aggressor’s motive is to sabotage her victim, for seemingly, no good reason at all. Although the participants in Guimond’s study were only *randomly* assigned to either a high or low position, the results of the study support the idea that when given more power, one begins to view those “inferior” to them more harshly. Ultimately, the behaviors prove to be even worse, as the statistics in Cheek’s article show, when people are actually in these higher positions and essentially have an opportunity to implement their authority.

Signs of Existence: Biotech Art at the Amelie A. Wallace Gallery

Donna Makar

Advanced Reporting and News Writing • Fall 2013

The current Bio-Art exhibition at SUNY College at Old Westbury's Amelie A. Wallace Gallery highlights the hefty price our ecosystem pays for so-called advancements, and explores three specific areas: genetic analysis, the health of our ecosystem, and human anatomy.

Heather Dewey-Hagborg's piece *Stranger Visions* calls into question a person's right to privacy concerning DNA. Dewey-Hagborg extracted DNA from randomly discarded items and used it to create a 3D life-sized portrait of the unsuspecting donor. There is also an accompanying video, called *DNA Spoofing: DIY Counter-Surveillance*, showing how easy it is for a person to use another's DNA in order to conceal their own.

Also utilizing DNA is Paul Vanouse's *Latent Figure Protocol Lightbox Instances*. His work is made up of six light boxes that display genetic codes the artist had cut and manipulated to appear in various recognizable symbols, showing just how easy it is to shape and mold DNA.

Brandon Ballengée makes a plea for avian and amphibian conservation with his two featured projects: *A Season in Hell Series: Deadly Born Cry* and *Malamp: the Occurrence of Deformities in Amphipians*. The first is a series of digital chromogenic prints of deceased birds that have been mechanically altered in lab experimentations to prevent wing development. The latter project is made up of two parts: *Styx* is a series of illuminated Petrie

dishes displaying genetically-malformed frogs that have been chemically treated to be transparent, and then injected with colored dye to showcase their deformities.

Reliquaries are enlarged photographs of these cleared and stained frogs, intended to serve as memorials. Both of Ballengée's works demonstrate the harsh impact our urbanization and pollution has on the environment.

Soyo Lee delves into anatomical specimen conservation with her piece, *A Dying Art*. It shows, with photographs and accompanying captions, how the artist worked with the Müller Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia to properly clean and restore decaying fetal remains that had been previously dissected and not properly preserved afterward. It is now possible for these specimens, afflicted by various medical conditions, to be studied by the medical community in order to learn about some of the crippling diseases that can affect humans while in utero.

Helen J. Bullard's featured piece highlights the threat the biomedical community poses to our environment. *Blood Oath* tells the plight of the Atlantic horseshoe crab, whose blood is often harvested by pharmaceutical companies for use in manufacturing intravenous medications. Although these animals are rehabilitated and then released back into their natural habitat, Bullard's piece reveals these creatures don't always survive this process.

Signs of Existence: Biotech Art is an eye opening experience. Even if you have no interest in science, this is a great exhibit to check out.

The exhibition continues until October 24th.

Reading Between the Lines: Ideas of Liberty and Emerging Social Equality in the Letters of William Eddis

Megan Murphy

Early America • Fall 2013

According to the three letters of William Eddis, the socioeconomic hierarchy of Maryland in the early 1770s included only two groups: the laborers and the aristocracy. Eddis detailed the two main groups of the laborers: the “unfree” laborers, who were the slaves and convicts, and the “semi-free” laborers, who were the indentured servants and the “free-willers.” The aristocracy included the wealthy landowners and planters. While Eddis only viewed the hierarchy of Maryland in just two groups, he viewed the “unfree” labor systems as acceptable, and thus, “invisible.” He also left the small “middling-class” as absent from his letters which limited the display of the whole socioeconomic pyramid to just laborers and the beneficiaries of that labor; the aristocracy. Reading between the lines, a critical reader, knowing the wider context, becomes aware that his letters reveal bias against the unfree labor systems- especially the slaves, as well as a bias against the middle-class, whom he ignores.

Written between 1770 and 1772, the letters of William Eddis illustrate the social hierarchy of the colonial tobacco region of Maryland while also hinting at the emerging ideas of liberty and social equality that fully came into fruition during the revolutionary era. Eddis discussed the systems of labor and the different kinds of servants in his first letter. The next two smaller letters briefly discussed the wealthier landowners and wealthy representatives, as well as adhering to the fact that despite this obvious inequality in wealth and society, all people felt a sense of “equality.” Since the document is a primary source, it has limitations;

such as bias. Eddis only wrote from his experiences and observations of society in Maryland from roughly 1770-1772. He remarked on the four different types of laborers he observed; Negroes, convicts, indentured servants and “free-willers,” and went on to compare and contrast their distinct characteristics and terms of service. Eddis also described the roles of the wealthy planters and the influences they had in society. Regarding all three letters together, he described the intricate, diverse economic system of Maryland.

Eddis discussed who he felt were the “unfree laborers;” the slaves and the convicts. Regarding the “Negro” laborers, or slaves, Eddis explained that they were the “entire property” of their owners, and how there was a low native Negro population in the New World since most of them were being imported from Africa (514). He observed that the slaves in the New World were generally in better condition and treated better than those “sent to slavery” on the West India Islands (Eddis 514). Regarding their worth, in regards to the other kinds of laborers, a slave’s death was considered a “material loss” for their owner since they labored for life (Eddis 515). It is because of this that they were generally “more comfortable” in their conditions, if compared with the others, though Eddis did not give evidence to support his claim.

On the other hand, the convict laborers were imported from England to work for a term of usually seven years. Interestingly enough, Eddis explained that Maryland was the only province that allowed the “free entry” of convicts into the area, while others, such as Virginia, felt that the convicts influenced a sense of “universal depravity,” and fear of setting bad examples for citizens and society (515). If a convict was able to pay for their own voyage overseas, they were free to do as they wished upon arrival, but most were sold off to work for their seven-year terms upon arrival to “planters, mechanics,” or others who would put them in “domestic work” (Eddis 515). After a convict served their term, they rarely chose to remain in America because of their bad reputation. They would either go back to

England, or disappear to a distant location and live in recluse to try and become a contributing member of society.

A theme throughout William Eddis's letters is how he made comparisons between America and England. He made the comparison between slavery in the New World and slavery in England, and made the statement that slaves were treated much worse in America than in England, while maintaining their overall good treatment in America due to their "material worth" to their owners. The population of blacks in New England was comparable to the amount in England, and the numbers increased as one traveled more south. As will be discussed later, this constant comparison between America and England may be the source of his "acceptance" of these unfree labor systems.

Eddis went on to describe who were the "semi-free" laborers; the indentured servants and the "free-willers." An indentured servant served a term of five years and traveled to America in search of better opportunities than they had in England. The deal was that their overseas trip would be paid for, with the stipulation that they labor for somebody for five years. He elaborated on the system of advertisements they were subjected to that portrayed America, the voyage overseas, and their period of labor, as too good to be true. He said that these people were being lied to- and they were, since their experiences were all but as promised in the advertisements.

Meanwhile, the "free-willer" laborers were also called the "adventurers," and even the biggest "victims" of this system. These free-willer laborers were promised a life of "ease and affluence" in America, but ultimately found themselves in servitude, and miserable (Eddis 516). Upon arrival to the New World, these people were sold to make-up for voyage costs if they couldn't obtain "situations on their own terms" (Eddis 516). In other words, if they could not figure out a living situation upon their arrival, they were sold off to the highest bidder into a term of servitude. Eddis called this supreme "duplicity and cruelty," and

stated that it was the epitome of deception (515). Just like the indentured servants, these free-willier laborers were thrown into a servitude term of five years before they could have their freedom back. The difference between indentured servants and the free-willers was that while indentured servants ventured to America for better opportunities, the free-willers came out of the “adventure.”

Eddis wrote of a severe distaste for the business that tricked these “free-willier” laborers into a five-year system of servitude under false pretenses. He called this “commerce” an “iniquitous traffic” (Eddis 516). This business, he said, was the ultimate deception in tricking people into believing that their lives would not only be so much better in America than in Britain, but that they would be treated with the utmost respect in the New World, even if they found themselves in a term of servitude. He equally blamed those in England who tricked these people into the trips, and those in America who sold them off upon arrival to the New World. He wondered at the irony that free-willers were said to “possess superior advantages” over the other laborers, while he thought that theirs was the saddest story of false hopes and deception (Eddis 514). Upon these feelings against the semi-free laborer trickery and trade, Eddis clearly felt a kind of sadness for those people.

Finally, Eddis discussed the third group from his letters; the wealthy landowners. In his second letter, Eddis described the more wealthy landowners who held “great weight and influence” in the government (Eddis 516). These wealthy landowners not only had strong influence, but they also controlled the aforementioned servants and depended on them as the labor, and the sources, of their profits. The elected representatives of any given province were also the wealthy members of society, so not only were they the ones profiting off of these systems of labor, but they also controlled the local governments since they were the elected officials.

Despite these obvious inequalities, all colonists, even those who Eddis described as

living in the more “humbler circles of life,” shared a general feeling of equality (517). It is in the opinion of this author that this is where Eddis’ bias and class status becomes more significant. One may certainly, and safely, assume that William Eddis’ social class was high since he “brushed off” the most severe system of labor (slavery), and since he presumably agreed with the advantages that the upper class (the wealthy planters), enjoyed. In describing the slaves and convict laborers (the “unfree” laborers), Eddis seemed to find both systems acceptable. This acceptance may stem from the comparison with England; he briefly compared the number of slaves, and their general well-being, to that of England. Also, since the convicts were being imported from Britain, he may have found their servitude completely acceptable, and necessary- having to serve the needs and good of society for all of their previous wrong doings. Upon this train of thought, it may be safe to say that while he viewed the unfree laborers as “necessary” for the function of society and economy, Eddis then only saw the world in terms of the aristocracy and the “semi-free” laborers. By only seeing the world in terms of the aristocracy, who benefited from large systems of labor, and the semi-free laborers, who produced the goods for the benefit of the aristocracy and economy, Eddis then left the unfree laborers as “invisible” in the economic hierarchy. While he went into detail upon the aristocracy and the systems of labor, he also left the small “middling class” absent from his letters, showing the limited scope of his concentration and the overall limitations of his letters in revealing the true story of the socioeconomic hierarchy in Maryland.

The land and environment of the Chesapeake Bay greatly influenced, and dictated, what kind of society would arise in the region; an industrial, profit-driven society based around the need for labor. In James Horn’s book, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake*, he discussed the English settlement of the Chesapeake Bay region during the seventeenth century. He argued that all colonists were

influenced by their environment with, “[N]o matter whether rich or poor, free or bound, all immigrants shared one thing: all would be profoundly influenced by the environment encountered in the tidewater” (Horn 123). While the immigrants were initially influenced and directly affected in many ways, the Chesapeake environment would prove to be influential to colonists living in Eddis’ time, towards the end of the eighteenth century. The land and environment provided appropriate conditions on which cash crops would reign supreme, and intricate systems of labor would be necessary to harvest the crop[s], which would lead to profit for the plantation owners. Horn explained how all immigrants were initially impressed by the region’s waterways and the “richness and diversity of woodlands,” and how they viewed the land, “in terms of the commodities it would in time yield” (126-7). The colonists were influenced first in the fertility of land for growing crops, most notably tobacco. This gave rise to plantations, which required lots of labor- whether from family members (for the small farmers), servants, or later, slaves. Since the rise in systems of labor coincided with the rise of plantations, and thus, wealthy plantation owners, society evolved into one that focused on the drive for profit through the different systems of labor, or social stratification, that William Eddis detailed.

Without the system of slavery, ideas of freedom and liberty could not have been sustained since slavery supported the entire economy during Eddis’ time. In Edmund S. Morgan’s article, “Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox,” from the *Journal of American History*, he discussed the dual uses of slavery and ideas of freedom and liberty in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Morgan’s argument was that: “The rise of liberty and equality in this country was accompanied by the rise of slavery” (Morgan 5). Morgan detailed how rebellion of the “landless freemen” (who used to be the indentured servants, the “free-willers,” or even the convict laborers), led to colonists realizing the more profitable, “secure” system of slavery. This contradiction can be seen throughout Eddis’ letters in

his great detailing of the four different kinds of laborers, but also in how he claims, in his last letter, that all people- even those in the “humbler circles of life,” agreed in a general sense of equality, despite such obvious inequality in regards to social class. As Eddis detailed, people also felt a sense of equality despite both economic dependence on England (and the growing sentiment of non-importation, culminating after the passage of the Stamp Act of 1765), but also with such obvious dependence on these laborers; the slaves, indentured servants, convicts, and free-willers. These laborers were the source of profit and trade for the colonies, either through their bound agreements to labor, or slavery.

Both male and female slaves suffered severe hardships in the forms of dangerous and exhausting physical demands, abuse, and even death, and thus, they did not experience the overall “good conditions” that Eddis claimed. In Jennifer Morgan’s book, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*, she discussed the work of enslaved women in the plantation south from the mid seventeenth century through the mid eighteenth century. Enslaved women had two responsibilities; reproduction and [field] labor. Her argument was, “While enslaved women grappled with the new dimensions and implications of their reproductive lives, they undertook considerable and onerous agricultural work” (Morgan 144). While Eddis did not specifically differentiate as to which gender of slave he was discussing, Morgan made the case as to how contrary to Eddis’ claim that slaves received generally “good treatment” because of their material worth to their owner, slaves actually suffered terrible conditions. Morgan detailed female slaves working in sugar fields, cattle pens, and rice swamps. She explained the exhausting, arduous, and dangerous work that slave women were subjected to, in addition to their reproductive responsibilities. In regards to the terrible work conditions of slaves on rice plantations, Morgan wrote, “The work was grueling, the tasks stretched the workday out until well into the night, and the toll that the pounding of rice took on the bodies of the enslaved was so extensive that slave-owners took careful notice

of the destruction of their human property” (164). Due to how female slaves were treated and the work they were required to complete, then surely the male slaves were not treated any better. All slaves, no matter their gender, were called upon to do back-breaking, dangerous labor which many times would lead to injury or even death.

Society of 1770s Maryland included not just the aristocracy and laborers, but also the “absent” middling class, who began to see themselves as the equals (or even superior), than those at the top of the social hierarchy. In Gordon S. Wood’s article, “Equality and Social Conflict in the American Revolution,” from *William and Mary Quarterly*, he discussed the shift of American social equality in the mid to late eighteenth century. His argument was, “There existed in the pre-modern world another [...] sort of oppression that [...] the Revolution eliminated, [an] oppression that subsumed the oppression of both slaves and women and in which all ordinary people had a stake” (Wood 706-7). He believed that the Revolution allowed the “middling class” to gain more social equality through transforming ideologies surrounding property and labor. Wood’s article may provide some supporting evidence for how Eddis, in his third letter, stated how: “[T]hose who move in the humbler circles of life, discover a shrewdness and penetration not generally observable in the mother country” (517). Eddis went on to explain that, “An idea of equality also seems [...] to prevail, and the inferior order of people pay but little external respect to those who occupy superior stations” (517). This same “anti-elitist” sentiment was echoed in Wood’s article as he described working men as “laborers” who shared, “a common resentment of a genteel aristocratic world that had humiliated and disdained them since the beginning of time because of their need to work” (713). While Wood primarily discussed how these anti-establishment ideas surfaced after the Revolution, these ideas were present before the war since Eddis’ letters were written mere years before the Revolution. As Wood stated, “Suddenly, all who worked for a living were no longer willing to put up with their hitherto degraded and oppressed

condition” (713). The ordinary men, or the middle class workers, “struggle[d] to establish their moral superiority over those they labeled leisured aristocrats- over those who did not have to work for a living [...], over those whose income came from proprietary wealth, [...] without exertion or manual labor” (Wood 317). This same thought process is what Eddis was speaking of when he recalled a general “disrespect” that the “inferior people” showed to the upper class.

The three letters of William Eddis illustrate the diverse socioeconomic hierarchy in an industrial, profit-driven society in the early 1770’s, while also confining it. While he described the unfree and semi-free laborers; the slaves, convicts, indentured servants, and the “free-willer” servants, as well as the wealthy landowners, or aristocracy, he left the whole middling-class as absent from his view. Despite showing bias against labor and inequalities of wealth, his letters also displayed ideas of liberty along with a stronghold to slavery, and hinted at the emerging ideas of social equality that would fully come into fruition after the American Revolution.

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Hair Addiction

Traci Newman

Advanced Reporting and News Writing • Fall 2013

Growing up I had big hair. I don't mean "Southern Bell" Texas-style kind of hair. I mean literally big, thick, frizzy and uncontrollable hair. If it would rain, all bets were off. My hair would start to grow bigger and bigger by the second. I was skinny and stood about 5 feet tall at the time, but my crazy mane easily added at least 2 inches or so. Thankfully no one ever made fun of me about it, at least not to my face. But once I got my hair "fixed," as I like to call it, some people let me know how they really felt.

I begged and pleaded with my mom to get my hair chemically straightened when I was in high school. She did take me to a few salons to ask about it, but every single one of them told her it would cost \$600 or more for the straightening treatment. My mom loves me, but not that much. I don't blame her at all; it really was a crazy amount of money to spend on hair.

Then in October of my freshman year of college, I found a salon that charged only \$300 for the Japanese straightening treatment. I didn't even hesitate to make an appointment. I spent over six hours in the salon and at times had three women working on my hair at once to try to speed up the process. I went in with my gigantic frizzy hair and came out with beautiful shiny pin-straight and frizz free hair! It actually felt too straight and flat, maybe because I was used to such intense frizz, but beggars can't be choosers.

After three days, I was able to wash my hair, and it dried completely straight and beautiful. I was in hair heaven. I showed up to my friend's house that night and all couldn't wait to see. One of the guys looked at me, his whole face lit up and he said, "Wow! You

really look so much better!” It was a backhanded compliment, but he was right and he had good intentions. I really did look so much better.

I don’t know if it was because my hair was straight or because we were out of high school but more guys were suddenly paying attention to me. I’m sure it was a mixture of things, but with my hair being straight, I felt more confident talking to people and I realized people took me more seriously. My mom even said, “You really do seem to have more boys interested in you since you got your hair fixed.” Thanks mom, I could have used this new interest in me when I needed a prom date.

But my hair has become my addiction. I would be willing to bet I spend more money on my hair in year than some people spend on food. I get my hair Japanese straightened two times a year at least (which is horribly damaging to your hair and I don’t actually recommend it), and then I get the Brazilian Keratin treatment done in between those. Keratin is made up of proteins and helps fix all the damage I do. My mother keeps telling me that all my hair is going to fall out. Luckily, this hasn’t happened yet.

One year I tried to let my hair grow out naturally and just do the keratin treatment but that was an epic fail. Once the muggy summer nights came, my hair frizzed up just the way it did in high school. Emotionally, I wasn’t ready to go down that road again and I very quickly booked a Japanese straightening appointment.

Even though my hair is chemically straightened, after a few months it starts to grow out and I have to blow it out myself. I really hate doing my hair and I’m not good at it. That’s when I start going to the salon almost weekly. I get blow outs on the weekends, or for events and even just nights out. One of my favorite feelings is walking out of the hair salon with freshly washed hair. I found the nights that my hair is professionally blown out, I make more money. I realize I have to spend money to have it blown out, but I think I usually make it back in tips. Either way, I just love the feeling and reactions I get from having my

hair done.

In our society appearance is important, whether you want to agree or not, appearances make an impact. From my personal experiences, I can tell you, people pay attention to what I'm saying more when my hair is styled. I'm not saying that it's right and that you should spend crazy amounts of money on getting your hair styled every week like I do, because I know I'm crazy. I'm just saying getting my hair "fixed" has drastically changed my social and professional life. Some people spend their money on luxury cars or handbags. For me, it's my weekend styled hair. I freely admit the only thing I'm thinking about right now is my Friday afternoon hair appointment.

19th Century Midterm

Niel Quinn

19th Century • Spring 2013

Long before the British ever stepped foot on the Indian subcontinent, outsiders have viewed many of the customs practiced here as strange. As is the case with many things that are foreign, there is a perception that just because something is different or not conforming to norms of a particular society, then it must be wrong. Sati, or the practice in which a newly widowed woman chooses to join her husband in death either by burning herself alive on his funeral pyre or by being buried alive with him, may have been the most controversial of all.

The earliest recorded instance of this practice dates all the way back to the 4th century BCE. One could imagine the horror of arriving in a foreign land and witnessing a woman willingly deciding to end her life among a joyous celebration by natives. Seen as barbaric by the few outsiders living in India, “in 1829 Lord William Cavendish Bentinck signed Regulation 17, which made the burning or burying alive of widows a criminal offense” (Walsh).

One such account of this ritual is told by a missionary living in Bangalore, Mysore by the name of Mr. England. In a letter collected by *Missionary Notices*, Mr. England describes being informed of a sati taking place nearby. Upon arriving with another missionary, presumably to stop it from happening, the men find this ritual already in its advanced stages. They try to speak to the woman but “the solemn and feeling address was counteracted by the influence and exhortations” of the crowd (150). He speaks of his experience as if he is watching a group of savages offering up a woman as a sacrifice to one of their many gods. His tone is often both sarcastic and condescending as when he mentions “the poor deluded widow, who was to be the victim of this heart-rending display of Hindu purity and

gentleness” (149). Mr. England paints the Brahmins, who are of the highest caste and are often the religious leaders, as the true villains. They can be seen plying the widow with narcotics, “craftily” keeping the widow’s infant away from her and even surrounding “their victim like so many beasts of prey, fearful of its escaping their grasp” (150). Mr. England holds Christianity as the far less barbarous religion without mentioning those burned and tortured during inquisitions across Europe in days past and directly compares it to Hinduism mentioning “the striking contrast which exists between the spirit of the Gospel of Our Blessed Lord and that of what has often been termed ‘mild and amicable’ Hinduism” (150). After repeatedly telling the reader of the sati’s horrific screams of agony, he mentions how some involved were charged with murder even though the British would not formally ban Sati until two years later.

The second account is by Major-General Sir W. H. Sleeman, written in 1829. Sleeman is a government official presiding over the Jabalpur district who must decide whether or not to allow the ceremony to occur after previously forbidding it the year prior. The sati, or woman committed to burning herself alive, in this case had already seen her dead husband cremated. Unable to perform sati due to the ban, the woman just sits beside the Nerbudda River all day and night refusing food or drink. After initially stating he would uphold his stance, he travels to speak to the woman and it is here that we see Sleeman struggle with morality and customs of a foreign land. Despite several attempts to talk her out of it, the widow instead is able to convince Sleeman that she is of sound mind and truly wishes to be a sati. By breaking her bracelets “she became dead in law and forever excluded from caste” (153) and when she spoke her husband’s name “she had resolved to die” because no Indian woman ever “pronounces the name of her husband-she would consider it disrespectful towards him to do so” (154). Sleeman reluctantly agrees after compromising with the family that no one else “will ever do the same” (155). A fire is constructed and surrounded by

sentries, in a way that appears as though it was sanctioned by the British government. “She then walked up deliberately and steadily to the brink, stepped into the centre of the flame, sat down, and, leaning back in the midst as if reposing upon a couch, was consumed without uttering a shriek or betraying one sign of agony” (156).

Where Mr. England views the custom as being savage and contrary to his Christian beliefs, Sleeman sees it as uncivilized and a violation of human rights as his initial prohibition suggests. Both have taken a stance. England is against it because God said so, and Sleeman, because he himself feels that it is wrong. My viewpoint lies closer to that of Sleeman.

Again we see how our Eurocentric ideals shape the way we feel about customs that are foreign or strange to us. On the surface the ceremony may appear to be a brutal way to satiate the bloodlust of an uncivilized people. In digging deeper we find that sati is both commendable and akin to saintliness in Hindu culture. So were the British right to ban the practice? I am still torn. Yes, it is a brutal ceremony but is it any business of the British to ban something that predates its own civilization? I’ll side with the British on this one just because many of these widows may not necessarily be in a stable frame of mind after the tragedy of losing their husbands and I can’t seem to shake my Eurocentric upbringing.

Math Lesson Plan

Jessica Spero

Student Observation and Practicum • Fall 2013

Topic: Division with one and two digit numbers.

Level: 5th Grade. **Estimated Time:** 20 minutes.

Classroom Context: There are 21 students in the classroom, 13 boys and 8 girls. This is an inclusion classroom containing a general and a special education teacher. There are also two teacher aides to help the IEP generated students. Two students are English Language Learners and two have behavioral problems. For the purpose of this lesson, only 6 children will participate. There will be 3 students who are struggling with division and 3 other students.

Learning Standards: Grade 5. NBT. Standard 6: Find whole-number quotients of whole numbers with up to four-digit dividends and two-digit divisors, using strategies based on place value, the properties of operations, and/or the relationship between multiplication and division. Illustrate and explain the calculation by using equations, rectangular arrays, and/or area models.

Objectives: Students will understand the process of finding a quotient with two digit divisors. Students will learn to collaborate with each other in a small group setting.

Behavioral Objectives: While playing “BINGO,” students will individually be able to solve the division problems with 85% accuracy.

Essential Questions: When do you need to divide in everyday life?

Procedure:

1. To begin this lesson, teacher will reiterate division related vocabulary (dividend, quotient, and divisor). Teacher will have students volunteer to point out each part of the division problem.

2. Teacher will explain to the students the rule of “BINGO” and that we are going to play “BINGO” using division problems. Students will write “BINGO” at the top of the page. Underneath, they will create a five-by-five grid of boxes. A sample board will be shown previously.

3. Ask students to think of numbers between 1 and 50. They will fill each of the boxes up with numbers of their choice.

4. On the classroom board/chart paper, write a division problem, such as “20 divided by 4.” Students then must solve this problem to see if they have that number on their card. Scrap paper will be provided.

5. If they have the quotient they should cross it off of their board. First to get a line on their board wins! To make the game different, students can shoot for all four corners, getting only diagonal rows or even covering the whole bingo card to win as the teacher prefers or the class decides.

6. To wrap up the lesson teacher will review with division flash cards. Students will be able to use their scrap paper BUT these problems are meant to be answered rapidly. For example: $100/10$, $60/2$, $50/2$, $300/100$, etc. These problems will continue to help students hone their division skills. Students will raise their hands to answer the problems.

7. To ensure understand, teacher will ask students the process they used to answer these questions. We will go over the process together as a class.

Assessment: Students will be assessed informally based on their participation in the lesson. Students will be assessed on their ability to solve simple division problems quickly.

Modifications/Adaptions: Students struggling with division will have guided instruction with solving the problems. Teacher will be flexible with the amount of time given to solve a problem depending on its difficulty.

Materials: Paper, pencils, flash cards, board /chart paper, sample BINGO board.

A Comparison of Pablo Picasso and Robert Motherwell

Eddy Walsh

Visual Culture: Warhol to Present • Fall 2013

Pablo Picasso's, *Guernica* and Robert Motherwell's, *Elegy For The Spanish Republic* series have more in common than one would think. They both offer perspectives into the feelings of tragedy and war. But, while Picasso's work has a more personal connection to the tragedy, Motherwell, while expressing similar sentiments, is fairly removed, personally, from the tragic events of the Spanish Civil War.

Picasso's work was created after he was told of the bombing of Guernica in 1937. He was not in the country at the time, but was in Paris working on a commission for the Spanish Republic. He was so taken by the events that he decided to scrap his original idea and begin *Guernica* in May of 1937.

You can tell when viewing the work the passion and sadness that went into creating the work. It is a work completed on a very large scale. I would say that this is to confront the viewer with the tragedy. There is definitely a narrative to the work. The figures in the work are clearly painted in distress. The fact that it is painted in black and white kind of gives it a newspaper quality. As if one is reading about this story. The bull and horse figures are a bit more vague, to me. It looks as though the bull in the left hand corner of the painting is covering or protecting the woman and her dead child. While, the horse seems to be trampling on a man in the center.

The piece clearly is a very intense, emotional experience. Created by someone who had a very close connection to what was going on. This was his "response" as well as denouncing the acts, publicly. You can also tell how emotional it was for him to work on by simply

looking back at his work before and after 1937. It seems as though he was definitely commenting on the topic in 1935, but before then it's a bit difficult to see.

Robert Motherwell's, *Elegy To The Spanish Republic no. 110*, is a very bold, abstract painting. Motherwell, who was 21 in 1936 said, "It was the most moving political event of the time." Which, interests me the most about his painting and also his decision to create 100 works dedicated to the subject.

In *no.110*, you are confronted immediately with the black shapes in the center of the piece. I view the black shapes as being a direct connection with the death and tragedy throughout the Spanish Civil War. The ovals almost remind me of holes in the ground or graves. The repetitive nature of the piece could also be connected to constant death or many lives that were lost. Motherwell was to have said the black ovals represented "bulls testicles," which was a comment on the poem "The Goring and the Death" by Federico Garcia Lorca. The title comments on an Elegy or a poem/song expressing sadness.

It is interesting to me, looking at the two pieces together, because they both expressed sadness, but there is more of a literal and direct narrative to Picasso's work. Motherwell, who was clearly moved by the events, took 10 years to comment. This isn't saying that he should, at 21, have commented immediately, but it does show how removed he was from the situation. Picasso, who was born in Spain had a clear view of what he was ready to express with his piece. Figures and narrative take over his painting. Motherwell, is vague and abstract. Leaving it open to interpretation.

The two pieces are directly connected because of the subject, but I would say have two completely different connections to the events. But, if anything, with Motherwell's piece being done in 1948, it just goes to show the post-modern way of thinking that was bubbling up in America at the time. Not just concerned about what goes on in their own town/city, but also developing a much more broad perspective and world view of events.

Writer's Statement

Justine N. Wilson

Native American Literature • Fall 2013

Throughout the semester I have spent a lot of my time reflecting upon my skills as a writer. I have come to realize a few things about myself and how it is that I write. I have never been someone who liked to sit down and revise a paper after I had declared it finished. Through this course I have come to understand the importance of revision and I have learned to value the increase in quality that revision offers my work. While struggling to force myself to revise a paper was one thing that I had to learn to deal with this semester, I had a second challenge that was even more difficult for me; taking constructive criticism. If it were not for the group exercises that I participated in during the course I would still be too shy to seek the very helpful opinions of my peers.

One of the aspects of my writing that I had focused on the most this semester was my tendency to write run-on sentences. I had gotten criticism for allowing my statements to run-on, not only in Native American Literature, but also in my Senior Seminar course. After receiving these criticisms I began to pay more attention to how my writing sounded. It was suggested to me that I begin to read what I had written out loud to myself. That particular practice has become a very useful one and I feel that it has helped me to understand how I can better phrase and structure my work.

As the semester continued on and my essay assignments continued to flood in, I found myself faced with an issue that I don't often find myself dealing with: I had begun to get writer's block. It was a very frustrating thing. I had never had a problem starting an essay before. Usually when I am writing an essay I can just go ahead and get started once I've decided on a topic. When it came time to write my second essay assignment of the course I

I just couldn't get the words out of my head. I knew what I wanted to say; I had no idea how to bring my thoughts out into the material world. That caused me a lot of grief and I began to worry about finishing the paper on time. My first draft was just an introduction that had to be scrapped, re-written, added to, subtracted from and then started all over again. I was able to get some help from a peer who reviewed my struggling introduction. She gave me some clarity and made me feel better about what I had so far and gave me insight on how to dig deeper into it.

I have to admit that I never thought that I would let anyone read a paper of mine that was incomplete. It's harder to believe that I went to another student for help. I can be shy sometimes and when I first learned that we would be doing peer reviews throughout the course I was very nervous. I generally try to avoid criticism which is why I don't like the idea of writing a draft, having someone comment on it and then writing it again. It's not that the work is tedious; the problem is that I'm afraid of what's coming back on the comment sheet. Doing group exercises in EL4000 has helped me to learn how to take constructive criticism. Because of my experiences within the course I can see the value in having someone critique me; the point is not to break me down it's to help me build myself up.

Going forward I know that I'm going to continue to allow myself to be critiqued and I hope to continue to refine my revision process. Casting aside my fears of criticism has helped me to grow as a writer and in allowing others in I have learned whole new ways to view my own work. I am very grateful to all of those who have lent me a hand and a red mark or two. I know that having confidence in my writing and faith in revision will be crucial to my future successes, especially as I move on to my last semester and complete my thesis project. I will gladly take the skills that I have learned in this course and continue to develop them well into my graduate career.

