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## **EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION**

The spring 2006 edition of the *Wagner Forum for Undergraduate Research* is a special issue devoted entirely to the First Year Program. Unlike previous issues it is separated into five sections corresponding to each of the major divisions. All papers are representative of work performed in the 2005 Learning Communities. They show the enthusiasm of our students and the effectiveness of connecting courses around a central theme. This interdisciplinary approach combined with fieldwork allows students to address real-world issues and greatly enhances their educational experience.

Special thanks to Dr. Brian G. Palestis whose assistance with the final manuscripts proved to be invaluable.

Read on and enjoy!

Gregory Falabella and Richard Brower, Editors



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# **Section I: The Sciences**

# The Cerebral Hemispheres – A New Age of Learning

Erin Davis <sup>1</sup>

As the scientific world advances, new innovations have been made in the field of education. Studies of split-brain patients, students, children, dyslexics, and the brain itself have shown that in order to enhance a student's ability to understand inside the classroom, teachers need to appeal to both hemispheres of the brain. By using techniques such as visual strategies, fantasy, and metaphor, educators can encourage students to approach different problems with appropriate strategies, instead of using the same method for all.

In order to understand the relevance of the cerebral hemispheres to education, one must first have an understanding of their basic function. Each hemisphere of the cerebral cortex of the brain is broken up into four lobes, or sections, by deep grooves called sulci. The four lobes are the occipital lobe (vision), the temporal lobe (hearing, and in humans, speech), the parietal lobe (sensory responses), and the frontal lobe (motor control and the function of other areas of the cortex) (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). The two hemispheres are connected in several places by cables of neurons called commissures. The largest and most important is the corpus callosum (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). The left hemisphere controls sensing and movement on the right side of the body, and the reverse is true of the right side. Each eye has a left and right visual field, and those images seen in the right visual fields go to the left side of the brain, and those seen in the left go to the right side of the brain. In order to communicate, the hemispheres share information through the corpus callosum (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

Scientists have discovered that the hemispheres are not symmetrical as was once believed, but are actually asymmetrical, each with its own functions. On a purely physical level, there are several differences between the left and right hemispheres. On the right, the Sylvian fissure is higher, and the frontal lobe is wider and protrudes. On the left, the occipital horn of the lateral ventricle is longer, and the occipital lobe is wider and protrudes (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). However, these differences all depend on whether a person is left- or right-handed. The above is true for right-handed people, but is commonly opposite for left-handed people (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written under the direction of Dr. Brian Palestis (Biology) for the Freshman Learning Community LC15, *From Microbes to Ecosystems*.



While studying the different cerebral hemispheres, scientists began to wonder where handedness fits in with hemisphere dominance. If the left side of the body is connected to the right side of the brain and vice versa, does this reflect a relationship between being right-handed and left-brain dominated, or left-handed and right brain dominated? This is unlikely, for about 90% of the human population is right-hand dominant, and has been so for as long as humans have kept records (Deutsch and Springer 1981). So why aren't left-handed people right-handed? One theory is that right-handedness is a trait that should exist for all humans and left-handedness is a result of prenatal or perinatal damage to the brain, probably due to a lack of oxygen (Deutsch and Springer 1981). Twins are found to be good evidence of this idea, because they are often left-handed and their chances of being damaged as fetuses are twice those of single-births. Another theory is that of the "right-shift factor" which states that most people inherit a right-handed gene, and those who do not inherit the gene may be left-handed, right-handed, or ambidextrous depending on such factors as training or injury (Deutsch and Springer 1981). Studies have shown that people who are right handed tend to be left-brain dominant, and people who are left-handed have more division in hemisphere dominance (Deutsch and Springer 1981). However, this seems to have little to no affect on intellect, as many studies have been done and tests performed and scientists are still unable to provide any evidence that either right-handed people or left-handed people have an advantage (Deutsch and Springer 1981).

As each side of the brain tends to process information in different ways, our dominant side tends to guide us in some of the ways we act, think, and learn. When it comes to processing information, the left-brain processes it in a linear method. Going from part to whole, it lines up pieces in logical order and draws conclusions. The left-brain also processes sequentially. List making and daily planning are common traits of a left-brain person, and working in sequence, such as spelling or mathematical problems, come more easily. Symbolic processing, using letters, words or numbers, and the ability to memorize them also comes easily to the left-brain. In writing, the left-brain pays attention to the mechanics, spelling, punctuation, or subject-verb agreement. They also have an easier time giving verbal, rather than visual, directions. Finally, the left-brain deals with reality. When faced with an environment, they adjust to it, making sure to learn and understand the rules, and are fully aware of the consequences of breaking those rules (Williams 1986).

The right-brain processes holistically, starting with the whole and breaking it down into parts. This may provide a right-brain dominated person with difficulty unless they understand the big picture first. Right brains also jump from one assignment to another, and sometimes finish assignments past the deadline because they were working on something else. When studying, the right-brain also needs things to use concrete,

visual examples to help them remember. When it comes to answering questions, right-brained people often follow hunches and are usually correct, and search for their feelings about a piece of writing. Right-brains also work best with visual directions and are able to think creatively (Williams 1986).

In order to study the cerebral hemispheres, scientists have done clinical studies of people whose brains have been damaged or the hemispheres split. The most prominent of these studies is that of the bisected brain. When a person has an epileptic seizure, neural firing spreads through the brain, and can pass through the corpus callosum (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). In order to contain the spread during life-threatening seizures, a surgeon will cut the corpus callosum. At first, the patient appears to be unchanged in personality, intelligence, and behavior after the operation is over. Scientists have come up with several tests, however, in order to measure the small ways the bisection affects thought patterns (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

During one test, a patient whose corpus callosum was detached sat in front of a screen with a small black dot in the center. The experimenter asked her to look continually at the dot while a picture of a cup is quickly flashed to the right side of the dot so only one hemisphere has time to view the picture (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). When the examiner asked the patient what she saw, she responded that she saw the cup. The experimenter then flashed a picture of a spoon on the left. When the experimenter asked her what she had seen on the screen, she replied, "Nothing" (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). After that, the researcher asked her to reach under the screen and to choose the object that had just been flashed just by using her hand. With her left hand, she felt several objects before grabbing the spoon. When asked what she was holding, she responded, "A pencil." In another test with the same patient, a picture of a nude woman was flashed at the left of the dot. The patient blushed and giggled, and when asked what she saw, she replied that she had seen "nothing, just a flash of light." When asked why she giggled, she replied, "Oh, doctor, you have some machine!" (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

When the patient saw the picture of the cup on the right side of the dot, it was processed in her left hemisphere and she was able to name the item (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). When she was shown a spoon on the left side, she said she was unable to see the object but was later able to pick it out from a group of objects. This study helped show that in most people, the left hemisphere is responsible for language and speech (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). When the corpus callosum is connected, the left and right hemispheres are able to work together to distinguish and name things. When the patient was flashed the nude picture, she had processed the information, as indicated by her blush, but because her left, or verbal, hemisphere did not receive information, she tried to rationalize her embarrassment by blaming it on the machine (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

Another interesting study with this patient was performed by having her sit in front of the same screen, on which was a composite picture of a child on the left, and a woman on the right (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). When asked what she saw, she responded that she had seen the child, but when given four pictures to choose from, the child and woman among them, the patient chose the woman, thus reinforcing the idea that the left hemisphere is the verbal side of the brain while the right hemisphere is the visual side (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). Interestingly, the patient denied that there had been anything unusual with the pictures she had seen, though each picture was only a half. Her brain was able to complete the picture for her, which helped scientists understand how split-brain patients function normally on a day-to-day basis (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

One very common disability caused by a malfunction in the cerebral hemispheres is dyslexia. Dyslexics are not mentally retarded or physically injured; they have normal intelligence and they are able to comprehend and produce spoken language (Bloom and Lazerson 1988). They do, however, have difficulty with reading. For some dyslexics, the problem lies in perceiving words as wholes and in knowing what words look like. This can be attributed to unstable eye dominance, which leads to disordered eye movements, making it difficult to follow the sequence of letters and words. This may be a reflection of unstable control in the brain where neither hemisphere has dominance over eye movements (Bloom and Lazerson 1988).

Students in a typical high school classroom are expected to learn through books and lectures. This makes learning difficult for those students who are right-brain dominant and causes those students who are left-brain dominant to neglect the development of important skills, such as creativity and problem solving. In order to allow students to develop both sides of their brain, teachers need to balance the ways they use the material, using both left- and right-brained techniques. In her book, *Teaching for the Two-Sided Mind*, Linda Verlee Williams states:

When lessons are presented visually as well as verbally, when students make their own connections between what is to be learned and what they already understand, and when all senses are engaged in the learning process, students are able not only to learn in the way best suited to their style, but also to develop a full and varied repertoire of thinking strategies.

While teaching a class, there are many ways to appeal to the left-brained student. Write an outline on the board, and teach the lesson as the student takes notes. Discuss abstract concepts and assign individual assignments. Assign research papers and keep the classroom quiet (Connell 2005).

There are also several techniques teachers can utilize in order to help students develop their right hemispheres and enable them to see patterns, use visual and spatial

thinking, and see things as a whole. First, balance verbal techniques with visual thinking. Using pictures, maps, diagrams, charts, and films can convey ideas more understandably than words alone, and also enhance the student's ability to use observational skills (Williams 1986).

A second right-brain technique is fantasy, or the ability to generate and manipulate mental images. This will help make verbal material more accessible and understandable to students, and is an extremely important problem solving skill. For example, Albert Einstein fantasized himself riding a ray of light, which became significant in his discovery of the theory of relativity (Williams 1986). Here is an example of an exercise a teacher may employ in order to help students fantasize about plants:

Imagine you are a seed... Feel your round seed-body sleeping in the dry soil... Now the rains start and the soil around you becomes wet... Feel yourself drink in the moisture... You are beginning to grow... Feel your body growing inside your seed shell... You are developing a root... Feel it grow and press against your shell-skin... The skin splits, growing... Now your tightly curled seed leaves push upward... Look around you... Listen to the sounds... Feel the earth around you... (Williams 1986).

Another form of a right-brain teaching technique is metaphor. Metaphorical, or analogical, thinking is recognizing a connection between two apparently unrelated things (Williams 1986). The key is to compare the new concept to something the student is already familiar with. For example, one can compare the human kidney with a gravel sifter. Each acts as a filter, allowing some particles to pass through and holding on to others. While kidneys and gravel sifters are obviously not the same thing, the comparison will enable the student to better understand the kidney's function. The metaphor also allows students to visualize a whole instead of dealing with individual parts, and can help them tie in their own experiences, which makes learning the subject easier and more efficient (Williams 1986).

When it comes to teaching, there are always differences between those classes taught by left-brain dominant teachers and those who are right-brain dominant. Left-brain dominant teachers tend to prefer teaching with lecture and discussion. They use outlines and stick to time schedules, and give students problems to solve independently. They assign more research and writing papers than teachers who are right-brain dominant, and they have a preference for organized, quiet classrooms. Right-brain dominant teachers, on the other hand, generally like hands-on activities instead of lectures. They incorporate more visuals and music into their lessons, and embrace the idea of multiple intelligences. They assign more group activities and like an active, noisy

classroom (Connell 2005). Despite the fact that each teacher would rather teach as they learn, incorporating both styles of teaching in the classroom is not difficult and will even help the instructor develop a balance between their hemispheres.

The theory of multiple intelligences was developed by Dr. Howard Gardner, a professor at Harvard University. The theory suggests that I.Q. testing is very limited and that human brainpower covers a much broader scope of potential in the form of eight different intelligences: Linguistic intelligence, which involves reading, writing, speaking, and conversing in one's own or foreign languages; Logical/ mathematical intelligence, which involves number and computing skills, recognizing patterns and relationships, timeliness and order, and the ability to solve different kinds of problems through logic; Spatial intelligence, which involves visual perception of the environment, the ability to create and manipulate mental images, and the orientation of the body in space; Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence, which involves physical coordination and dexterity, using fine and gross motor skills, and expressing oneself or learning through physical activities; Musical intelligence, which involves understanding and expressing oneself through music and rhythmic movements or dance, or composing, playing, or conducting music; Interpersonal intelligence, which involves understanding how to communicate with and understand other people and how to work collaboratively; Intrapersonal intelligence, which involves understanding one's inner world of emotions and thoughts, and growing in the ability to control them and work with them consciously; and Naturalist intelligence, which involves understanding the natural world of plants and animals, noticing their characteristics, and categorizing them (Armstrong 2000). Gardner believes that schools and culture focus primarily on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence, but should instead place equal attention on those who show gifts in other intelligences, such as artists, musicians, designers, dancers, entrepreneurs, architects, and naturalists. According to Gardner, children who express talent in these fields are often seen as underachievers and don't have much reinforcement to develop these gifts while at school.

In order to accommodate for those students with intelligences in areas other than linguistics or mathematics, a major change in the way schools are run is suggested. Teachers should be trained to present their lessons in myriad ways, using music, art, field trips, cooperative learning, role play, and inner reflection to help all students develop their individual talents. For those with linguistic intelligence, exercises such as reading interesting books, playing word board or card games, listening to recordings, using various kinds of computer technology, and participating in conversation and discussions should be employed. For those with logical/mathematical intelligence, classifying and sequencing activities, playing number and logic games, and solving various kinds of puzzles. For those with visual/spatial intelligence, experiences in the graphic and plastic arts, sharpening observation skills, solving mazes and other spatial tasks, and exercises in

imagery and active imagination. For those with bodily intelligence, playing with blocks and other construction materials, dancing, playing various active sports and games, and participating in plays or make-believe. For those with interpersonal intelligence, cooperative games, group projects and discussions, multicultural books and materials, and dramatic activities or role-playing will help them learn. For those with intrapersonal intelligence, participating in independent projects, reading illuminating books, journal-writing, imaginative activities and games, and finding quiet places for reflection. Finally, for those with naturalist intelligence, exploring nature, making collections of objects, studying them, and grouping them (Campbell *et al.*, 1999). This theory appeals to those teachers who are right-brained because many children who are right-brained are diagnosed with ADD, and the multiple intelligence system of learning helps those who are unable to think logically or linguistically achieve a higher ability to function in the world because they have been taught how to do what they can do best (Gallagher 2005).

Although there have been many enthusiastic responses to the idea of teaching with the goal of utilizing a student's weakness based on hemispheric dominance, not everyone is thrilled with the idea. John Bruer, president of the James McDonnell foundation, which was established to "improve the quality of life" by giving grants and scholarships to a new generation of knowledge (James S. McDonnell Foundation 2005), thinks that connecting the classroom and the laboratory now would be premature, holding back attempts at educational reform. He insists that these ideas of restructuring traditional education are not newly constructed, based on newfound information on the brain, but instead are the product of thirty-year-old concepts of psychological research. Bruer feels that, although the idea of scientists studying the brain and the psychological mind together is "exciting", introducing this form of education so soon would be a mistake as there is no clear-cut, neurological evidence yet. He feels that educators are incorrect in applying these techniques in the classroom and should wait for hard facts before they run around changing the way things are done (Bruer 1999).

However, many teachers feel that classroom practice is experimental: only by trying different approaches to teaching can they find what works best. Instead of taking things directly from neuroscience, they study it and devise new methods of teaching based on some of the ideas (Ranpura 1999).

Teachers devote their lives to helping children learn and grow. By using such innovative methods as metaphor, fantasy, and visual thinking in addition to logic and linguistics, teachers are able to bring more insight and understanding to the learning process, enabling students to work to the best of their ability. Perhaps, in the years to come, scientists will solve the brain's mysteries, allowing educators to aid their students in ways they never dreamed were possible.

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**Section II:**  
**The Social Sciences**

# The Evolution of Society's Recognition of Child Neglect

Victoria Brown<sup>1</sup>

Over the past century child neglect has evolved to become the “parental failure to perform certain duties, which failure is observable in the child’s personal appearance and behavior” (Hankerson 396). Child neglect, however, was not always a concern in American society. Prior to the mid 1870’s a parent did not have to feed, clothe, or protect their child and society did not protest such behavior; society did not try to save the child. The concept of child neglect did not exist. Beginning in the late nineteenth century society began to increase the amount of attention they gave to a child’s well being and child neglect began to be recognized as a social issue.

At the time of the industrial revolution in the United States child neglect began to become a societal concern (Tomison 46). The first publicized case of child neglect occurred in New York City in December of 1874. This case, commonly known as the Mary Ellen Legend, initiated society’s concern for the protection of children. At the young age of nine, Mary Ellen lived in a small tenement building with her foster parents Mary and Francis Connolly. After hearing the screams of a child, Mary Ellen’s neighbor contacted mission worker Etta Angell Wheeler. Wheeler visited the Connolly’s apartment where she found Mary Ellen: thin, pale and about the size of a five-year-old child. In the middle of the winter she was standing barefoot, dressed in an old, tattered dress. A whip lay on the kitchen table; marks demonstrating its use lay on Mary Ellen’s body. She slept on the floor in front of a window. Mary Ellen was left alone in an apartment and was not allowed outside to play with other children (Costin 204-207).

At the time of the Mary Ellen case there were no child protection agencies; there were no laws to protect children. However, there were organizations for the protection of animals. Etta Angell Wheeler presented Mary Ellen’s case to Henry Bergh, the president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. After much persuasion, Wheeler was able to convince Bergh to use his organization to save Mary Ellen. The Society for the Prevention of the Cruelty to Animals claimed that children were like animals, weak and helpless; therefore, they should be entitled to protection under laws against animal cruelty (Costin 204-205). Based on this claim Mary Ellen was removed from her home with the Connollys. She was put on trial where she testified that she “did not want to go back to live with mamma because she beats me” (Costin 207). Mary Connolly was found

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written under the direction of Dr. Jean Halley (Sociology) and Dr. Amy Eshleman (Psychology) for the Freshman Learning Community LC19, *Race Matters and Gendered Selves in American Society*.

guilty of assault and battery. Mary Ellen was then sent to live with her grandparents (Costin 208).

Mary Ellen opened society's eyes to the horrors of child abuse and neglect. Society had a new concern for the protection of children. Immediately following the Mary Ellen case, organizations for animal rights became organizations for the rights of animals and children. This gave organizations the ability to raise money for both causes. Henry Bergh's organization became the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Children. The American Humane Association produced a double-sided seal, one side for animals and one side for children (Costin 212-213).

As the animal rights organizations tried to save the children, so did the women's rights movement of the 1870's. Women believed that children's needs were very similar to their own; therefore, they acted for the rights of both women and children. The movement opposed child abuse and neglect. In order to eliminate child maltreatment, the goal of the women's rights movement was to "reform child care and child nurture" (Costin 211).

The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) was also formed in 1874 as a result of the Mary Ellen case (Costin 213). This agency was established as a preventive law enforcement agency, whose main mission was to protect children from abuse and neglect (Hudson and Richett 862). However, from the time of its formation the NYSPCC had gendered stereotypes woven into its policies. For example, the society was concerned about young boys' physical treatment, while they were concerned about the emotional treatment of young girls (Costin 218). New York legislation also gave the NYSPCC "powerful control over the lives of the poor, neglected and immigrant community" (Hudson and Richett 862). Such legislation enabled the NYSPCC to persecute classes and races whose way of child rearing may not have fit the social norm. While the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children had its flaws it served as the origin for Child Protective Services (Hudson 860).

In addition to the formation of organizations for the protection of children, the Mary Ellen case also led to new legislation and an early definition of child neglect. Family law was revised to include the well-being of the child. "A new standard of welfare arose, one that considered the child's best interest by determining fault" (Costin 214). Used in determining custody of a child, this new legislation relied on the early definition of child neglect, which stated that neglect was "omission on a part of the parent that led to inadequate care of a child" (Meezan and Rose 280). In application, this early definition of neglect focused on conditions that were considered best for a child's growth. By using the early definition of neglect and the new family legislation a child would be placed with a parent based upon the child's best interests.

While the Mary Ellen case was promoting concern for children in New York, child neglect was becoming a concern within day cares in Philadelphia. These day cares, however, were not ordinary day cares; they were known as baby farms. Baby farming was the boarding of babies in exchange for money, costing a mother \$1.50 to \$3.00 a week per child. The baby farms were often run by poor women and used by poor women as a childcare for their infants (Broder 129).

Even though many baby farms were created with the intentions of caring for children, they were often misused. Baby farms allowed mothers to slowly abandon and neglect their children. Mothers would stop paying their fees and the baby farmers would either abandon or kill their babies (Broder 140). As society began to notice that a disproportionate number of babies were dying from unknown causes, investigators began to scrutinize the baby farms (Broder 132). An investigation of one baby farm confirmed neglect as it reported a number of malnourished babies in the house as well as a baby's corpse lying on the kitchen table (Broder 140).

Once the child neglect that occurred within baby farms was publicized, middle class Philadelphia was outraged. Baby farms were viewed as a result of the social relationships among poor families and as a threat to "property, morals, and political life" (Broder 133). The middle class, however, were not the only class upset by the misuse of baby farms. Many poor, working mothers were also concerned with the neglect that was occurring within baby farms. There were mothers who relied on baby farms for childcare; they were now concerned for the safety of their children (Broder 144).

Deaths of many poor infants occurred within baby farms as the result of a lack of affordable, safe childcare in Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Society to Protect Children from Cruelty began to lobby for legislation that would regulate baby farms. When such legislation was enacted it required a childcare to have a license in order to care for children under two years of age. Also members of the Pennsylvania State Board of Charities and officers from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children were to inspect baby farms on a regular basis (Broder 142). This legislation regarding child neglect in baby farms helped to protect poor children as well as increase society's awareness of the cruelty that lies within child neglect.

As society began to recognize the severity of child neglect, the act of neglect remained gendered. This is illustrated in the Charlotte Duffy case. In 1878, Charlotte Duffy, a young girl of eleven, was diagnosed with an incurable hip disease; two years later Charlotte was confined to bed. On September 22, 1880 Charlotte's aunt, Janet Nagie, walked into Charlotte's room to find maggots in her bedsores. After cleaning Charlotte's sores, Nagie called a neighbor who helped move Charlotte to a hospital. The neighbor claimed, "if a skeleton was taken and covered with thin paper, the bones would

not show more clearly than did those of the child.” The next day Charlotte died of exhaustion (Hogan 305-306).

After the death of Charlotte Duffy, her parents, Annie and Matthew Duffy, were brought to trial. While on trial Annie Duffy testified that Charlotte often went for days without food and in the four months that she had been confined to her bed she had only been bathed three times. Her bedsores were never shown to a doctor (Hogan 305). At the conclusion of the trial, Annie was found guilty of criminal negligence and manslaughter. Matthew Duffy, however, was found innocent. It was not the father’s responsibility to care for a child. The father’s duty was to earn money for the family. As long as a father was working and earning money, he was not neglecting his children. The mother’s responsibility was to care for the children and tend to their needs (Hogan 306). If a child was emotionally or physically abused or neglected it was the fault of the mother not the father.

The first wave of societal concern for the welfare of children was initiated by the Mary Ellen case; the second was initiated in 1962 by Dr. C. Henry Kempe and the battered-child syndrome. In his medical practice, Dr. Kempe noticed that a large number of children came in for treatment for unexplainable injuries (Hudson and Richett 865). These unexplainable injuries led Dr. Kempe to develop the battered-child syndrome, which provided medical evidence of child neglect and abuse (Tomison 4). Three main characteristics composed the battered-child syndrome: the parental potential to abuse, an at-risk child, and a crisis. The combination of these three characteristics could result in child neglect or abuse (Hankerson 399).

The battered-child syndrome led to an increase in concern for child maltreatment in the United States as well as throughout the world. National attention was focused on child abuse and neglect as the battered-child syndrome “exposed the myth that parents always act in their child’s best interest” (Hudson and Richett 865). As a result of the battered-child syndrome, states enacted legislation that required the reporting of all cases of child abuse and neglect (Hudson and Richett 865). The Child Development-Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Program was founded to help identify, prevent, protect, and treat child abuse and neglect. Accomplishments of this program included the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, the awarding of research grants and the Welfare Services Act, which provided financial support and foster care along with other protective services (Hankerson 405). Dr. Kempe’s battered-child syndrome enlightened society to the severity and frequency of child neglect, which led to an increased interest in prevention and protection.

Although the laws requiring the reporting of child neglect and abuse helped to protect children, they also exploited children of lower classes. The definitions of child neglect were formed based upon the values and standards of middle and upper

class families. Many of the parents accused of child neglect were of a lower economic status (Hudson and Richett 867). An abusive parent can be found within all social classes, yet parents of middle and upper class status are more likely to abuse or neglect their children by withholding care and affection. This type of abuse is less obvious; therefore the authorities are less likely to investigate such homes. Abusive parents of low socio-economic status are more inclined to physically abuse or neglect their children, which makes them more susceptible to inspections (Hankerson 400-401).

Another milestone in society's comprehension of the severity of child neglect occurred in 1964 with Leontine Young's landmark study. Until Young's study was publicized all forms of child maltreatment were considered to be the same. Young, however, established clear distinctions between abuse and neglect. By using three characteristics, interpersonal traits, intent of the parent to mistreat, and the effect on the child, Young was able to determine whether a case constituted child abuse or child neglect. Young also provided society with a new definition of neglect. To Young neglect was the "failure by emotional needy parents to provide adequate care for the children" (Meezan and Rose 280).

Despite the fact that the battered-child syndrome had attracted the attention of the world, child neglect continued and it continued in a day care in Alberta, Canada in 1971. Here Margaret Leeferink operated a day care, The Boutique Children's Hotel, out of her home. After Leeferink refused to cooperate with authorities, Child Welfare workers entered the day care and confiscated the children on neglect charges. Child Welfare workers testified discovering that Leeferink ran her day care primarily from her garage, which had no running water, no windows for ventilation, an extremely filthy rug and a foul stench. There were ten infants in the garage with Leeferink and another three left unattended inside the house. All the babies needed changing. Leeferink would change one then move along to another without washing her hands (Langford 16-17).

After the neglect that occurred at The Boutique Children's Hotel was uncovered, parents continued to send their children to the day care. Low-income parents needed a low-cost day care for their children and for this reason Leeferink's day care was appealing. While Leeferink's day care was as cheap as the others, \$55 per month, she provided services that many day cares did not. Leeferink picked the children up in the morning and brought them home in the evening, which was extremely beneficial for parents that did not own a car. At The Boutique Children's Hotel the monthly fee also included food and diapers, which were an extra fee at most day cares (Langford 20).

Low-income parents needed to send their children to low-cost day cares even though they would have to sacrifice quality care. Corners were often cut in cheaper day cares in order to save money (Langford 23). However, low-cost day cares, such as The

Boutique Children's Hotel, were still "attractive to parents of limited means: for them, every dollar saved on childcare could be spent on another essential item in the household budget" (Langford 20). Families of a higher economic status can afford to place their children in high quality day cares that are run by professional caretakers (Langford 24). Lower classes have more aspects in their lives that can contribute to child neglect (Hankerson 402). Having to send a child to a low-quality day care because of the cost is an aspect of poverty that can contribute to child neglect.

Discrimination against children from lower economic status continued as the child abuse and neglect prevention discussions of the 1970's did not discuss poverty and the pressures that it places on parents (Daro and Donnelly 733). However, the 1974 Child Abuse Treatment and Prevention Act did increase society's understanding of the severity of child neglect. Focusing primarily on prevention, the Child Abuse Treatment and Prevention Act, generated optimism within society that it was possible to protect children (Daro and Donnelly 732). In order to receive federal aid, each state was required to instate and enforce a child abuse and neglect law. The Child Abuse Treatment and Prevention Act also stated that child abuse and neglect were equal under law. A new definition of neglect was established. Child neglect was now the "lack of proper parental control or guardianship" (Meezan and Rose 280). While "proper parental control" included food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and supervision, a child's emotional well-being was also included. For the first time it was understood that emotional neglect effects a child's mental and emotional development (Meezan and Rose 280). Recognizing that emotional neglect was as damaging to a child's development as physical neglect was a major step in society's awareness of child neglect.

By the end of the 1970's society had begun to improve childcare methods. Parents were more caring and protective of their children than ever before (Whiting 23). Between the 1980's and 1990's, professionals had discovered the harmful effects that abuse and neglect have on children. As a result of such research society had developed an interest in the prevention of child maltreatment (Tomison 8). Many local agencies have been founded to support families and help protect children. These agencies focused on parenting in order to stop child abuse and neglect before it began. The National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse projected a goal to reduce child abuse and neglect by 20 percent by 1990. Such a goal changed public attitudes and encouraged society to protect children and prevent abuse and neglect (Daro and Donnelly 734).

Even as society was motivated to prevent child abuse and neglect, in 1989 it was reported that "child neglect continues to be the largest single category of child maltreatment, now constituting 55 percent of all reports" (Meezan and Rose 279). As a result of such statistics, from the last decade of the twentieth century through the present, society focused primarily on early intervention. Society concentrated on insuring that

parents had the ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children (Daro 735). By ensuring a parent's ability to raise a healthy child, society hoped that child abuse and neglect would be prevented.

Since the late nineteenth century society has come to understand the severity of child neglect. As cases of neglected children have emerged, organizations to protect children, such as the Children's Aid Society of the late nineteenth century and the modern Children's Defense Fund, have been established (Finkelstein 4). Though society has made much progress in understanding and preventing child neglect, there are still many children abused and neglected each day. "Eradication of child abuse and neglect is still the most important social issue we face today" (DeMause 217).

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# Ethnic Differences and Eating Disorders among Women

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The prevalence and manifestation of eating disorders are argued to vary in regards to race. Eating disorders have previously been labeled the “White women’s disease” (Dawkins). However, eating disorders are increasingly observed among the African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American female population in the Western world. Ethnic biology and attitudes are being linked to eating disorders based on body dissatisfaction and weight concern.

The White female’s close association to eating disorders promotes the belief that minorities are somehow immune to the cult of thinness. More specifically, African-American and Hispanic women are thought less likely to develop eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, because their ethnic groups consider voluptuous physiques more attractive (Dawkins). However, as “a trend of severe eating disorders” becomes more evident among minorities, the restrictively White association is dispelled (Brodey). The association of eating disorders as a White women’s problem is rooted in some fact. It was concluded by Barlow and Durand in 1995 that 90% of severe eating disorder cases were then currently diagnosed among adolescent and young White females (Abrams and Stormer 444). The numbers only reflect who is actually being diagnosed. It is argued that minorities remain invisible, because women of color are unwilling to seek help and professionals fail to properly diagnose eating disorders across ethnic groups.

The perceived notion that the sought after ideal of thinness does not exist in communities of color who celebrate “thickness” only aids, as Tracey Rose suggests, African-American women in believing that eating disorders and body image issues are really only “white problems” (31). Women of color often fail to recognize their problem as an eating disorder. Minorities face difficulties in confronting their problem, because eating disorders “conjure images of affluent White teenage girls” (Brodey). For women of color, the association of eating disorders with “whiteness” makes seeking help very difficult; feeling like they are “selling out” or will be treated as an oddity among friends and medical professionals (Thompson 15). Whittaker argues that the emphasis of eating disorders as a “whites only issue” limits who is allowed to suffer, leaving women of color

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to suffer in silence. Silent victims, minority groups remain particularly underrepresented.

Dawkins proposes that the suffering of minority women remains invisible, as it goes undetected by professionals because women of color do not fit the perceived profile. Due to the association of eating disorders with White females, many highly trained professionals misdiagnose or ignore signs of eating disorders in other ethnic groups (Thompson 12). If minorities are not being properly diagnosed, this association of eating disorders and Whites will continue. Experts are now researching the prevalence and manifestation of eating disorders among ethnic groups in hopes of properly diagnosing and treating women of color.

Body dissatisfaction and weight concern are closely examined in regards to eating disorders. Research on the prevalence of body dissatisfaction among ethnic groups does differ. The majority of studies conclude that African-American girls are less likely than Whites to express body dissatisfaction and more likely to discuss positive aspects of their body (Croll, et al.). Other studies report no significant difference in body dissatisfaction among White, African-American, and Hispanic women (Allen and Demarest 465). Several studies explored the relation of Body Mass Index (BMI) and body dissatisfaction. After controlling for BMI, they also found no significant differences in body dissatisfaction (Arriaza and Mann). Overall, significant differences became evident, as to what extent individuals within these ethnic groups are dissatisfied. Despite dissatisfaction among African-American women, they have very accurate ideas of what men reportedly find most attractive and they are more realistic in their shape and weight concerns and more tolerant of being overweight (Allen and Demarest 466, 471). The desired body image among African-American women tends not to be so drastic from their current state, while White women are more likely to distort the attainable body image. White women have been reported to have the highest level of distortion followed by Asian girls (Geliebter and Gluck). Hispanic women often fall in the middle, when examining dissatisfaction, but usually their numbers remain closer to Whites than African-Americans. Differences in body dissatisfaction among ethnic groups are observed, as well as what body image constitutes satisfaction. The desired body image remains a significant difference among ethnic groups. In determining how the prevalence of eating disorders varies based on ethnicity, one must investigate which individuals within these ethnic groups will negatively alter their eating behaviors in an attempt to obtain their idea of satisfaction (Arriaza and Mann 313).

Research on the manifestation of body dissatisfaction and weight concern reveals differences among ethnic groups. Differences emerged among which ethnic groups are most likely to manifest body dissatisfaction and weight concern into an eating disorder, as well as how the eating disorder manifests itself. Whites reported the most dieting, a significant 72% (Bisaga et al.). Severe restriction of food intake appeared most

common among Whites, though Hispanics and Asians also reported restrained eating (Arriaza and Mann 313). Whites and Hispanics were most likely to engage in induced vomiting and to use diet pills, while Hispanics and African-Americans had the highest binge eating rates (Bisaga et al.). African-Americans had the highest use of laxatives, which Whittaker notes as an explanation why women of color may go undetected. On the whole, Whites and Hispanics were observed as most susceptible to develop eating disorders based on body dissatisfaction and weight concern.

Numerous theories are proposed to explain differences in the prevalence and manifestation of eating disorders among ethnic groups. The existence of ethnic-specific ideas of beauty, weight, and shape is a prominent theory for ethnic differences in eating disorders. White women identify themselves with the Anglo-American ideals of thinness, self-control, discipline and competitiveness (Arriaza and Mann 309). The Western world and White women value dieting, which was in fact a popular manifestation of body dissatisfaction among White women (Bisaga et al.). Eating disorders can become the alternative to unsuccessful dieting when these women cannot achieve the thinness they desire. Research shows that the desires among White women are often distorted and unattainable. Taught to be thin, these women have had very little access to communities in which women of different sizes are valued (Thompson 35). This strong emphasis of body shape and size greatly impacts White women and their susceptibility to eating disorders.

The African-American community is particularly perceived to promote a larger ideal body image for women. In these communities, curviness has generally been accepted and celebrated (Brodey). Research concluded that black men are less likely than White men to refuse a date with an overweight woman (Allan and Demarest 3). Varying weights among African-American women have been labeled beautiful and desirable, while White women who are considered pretty are almost always petite (Thompson 30). If the approval of various body shapes and sizes is absolutely evident in the African-American community, African-American women who identify themselves with this community do not face the pressures of thinness as others do. Less pressure within their ethnic culture has been directly related to the African-American woman being satisfied with her larger shape (Geliebter and Gluck). The existence of this strong ethnic identity protects African-American women from the culture of thinness. In contrast, this strong ethnic identity also prevents them from seeking help when they do need it. The use of covert unhealthy eating behaviors among African-American women, such as the use of laxatives, can be related to their unwillingness to associate themselves with the “White woman’s disease”, failing to uphold their ethnic identity.

With so many varying cultures within the Hispanic category, Thompson suggests that no single ethnic ideal about body size or eating patterns exist for Hispanic

women (28). Unlike the Western world's emphasis of thinness, Thompson discusses the lack of emphasis of fat versus skinny among Dominican and Puerto Rican cultures. If such Hispanic cultures lack a standard preference of their own, Thompson argues that the pressures of assimilation and racism make these women especially vulnerable to strictures about weight from outside influences (28). Being fat is viewed positive for the rural middle class in Argentina, but within the larger cities of Argentina, having been exposed to media and magazines, a value for dieting and an emphasis on slim figures is apparent (Thompson). This illustrates the argument that ethnic differences are not simply based on ethnic-specific ideals, but on the development of ethnic identity. In discussing eating disorders among Hispanic women, acculturation with Western values and media has been closely linked to their development of eating disorders (Arriaza and Mann 310).

In non-Westernized countries and minority groups in the United States, eating disorders are much less common (Geliebter and Gluck 144). This difference is attributed to the lack of integration of these countries or minority groups with the Western culture and value of thinness. Tsai and Gray ask, "How much the acquisition of an eating disorder can be attributed to the society of the culture of which an individual is a member of?" Identifying oneself with an ethnic group has been linked to self-concept and psychological functioning (Bisaga et al. 1). If women of color remain poorly represented or discriminated against in mainstream society and fail to associate themselves with their ethnic-specific ideals, as previously discussed, studies show that their identification with White culture can make them more vulnerable to body image distortions and eating disorders (Abrams and Stormer 444). Dawkins cites that the adoption of Western values, concerning attractiveness and thinness, has made anorexia and bulimia "equal-opportunity disorders." Western media is often blamed for the epidemic of eating disorders. Western societies idealize thinness in popular media as fashionable (Allen and Demarest 465). Dr. Striegel-Moore argues, as companies include diversity in media, the image of thinness remains, advertising beautiful, but thin African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American women (Brodey). If this is the case, all races must uphold the ideal of thinness in order to be considered fashionable and successfully assimilate.

An African-American, Ms. Knuckles, who suffered from bulimia as a teen, recognizes that when it came to body image her perception of beauty was based on her White peers and images of White celebrities in the media (Brodey). Despite her ethnicity, she did not identify herself with the ethnic-specific ideals that are common among African-Americans because her peer group did not reflect these ideals. The more ethnically diverse the peer group, the more aware women of color become of societal standards (Abrams and Stormer). Maintaining friendships within an ethnic context can in fact protect minority groups from the influence of dominant standards of thinness that are not proportionate to their physiques.

How body dissatisfaction and eating disorders are proportionate to ethnic groups in regards to Body Mass Index (BMI) or body weight is another heavily researched argument. Ethnic differences may not only be linked to societal norms, but to genetic disposition, as well (Arriaza and Mann 314). In numerous studies the variable of BMI has been controlled to conclude more accurate assumptions about body dissatisfaction among ethnic groups. Hispanics, who on average amass a greater weight as an ethnic group, have often been reported to have greater body dissatisfaction. The greater dissatisfaction among Hispanics is no longer evident after controlling for their weight or BMI (Arriaza and Mann 312). This illustrates how ethnic biology can create the differences that are observed in body dissatisfaction. The results of Arriaza and Mann's research showed that Asians had a significantly lower BMI than Whites, who had a significantly lower BMI than Hispanics (312). Although they had the lowest levels of obesity, a relatively high percentage of Asian girls perceived themselves as overweight (Croll, et al. 966). The large discrepancy between their BMI and desired weight illustrates distortion.

BMI can be responsible for the development of ethnic-specific ideals of beauty, weight, and shape. The disposition for African-American women to be heavier has resulted in the acceptance of larger body shapes. However, in regards to assimilation, the greater BMI among African-American and Hispanic women leaves them furthest from achieving the ideal thin body shape and size, and puts them at most risk of developing eating disorders when identifying themselves with these disproportionate ideals. The Western world's battle with obesity reinforces the ideal of thinness, continually affecting those who are at highest risk of becoming obese, African-American and Hispanic women (Whittaker).

Women of color are often among those who are overlooked when diagnosing eating disorders. Body dissatisfaction and weight concern among women who are of normal weight or underweight offer clearer signs of risk for eating disorders (Arriaza and Mann 310). Differences in BMI or the average weights of an ethnic group cause medical professionals to ignore the signs of eating disorders among women of color. More specifically, African-American and Hispanic women, who are most likely to be categorized as overweight, are less likely to be diagnosed with an eating disorder.

In making the connection between race and eating disorders, it is important to understand what obstacles and variables exist. The lack of focus on minority groups and eating disorders does result in numbers that are not as reliable (Brodey). When diagnosing eating disorders different methods of classification can be used and will result in number discrepancies (Tsai and Gray). Elements, such as age and socioeconomic status, create differences in research results. Specific psychological and developmental dynamics of researched individuals also affect conclusions. By factoring in these variables in their studies of the relationship between eating disorders and race,

researchers are able to achieve the most accurate results. Further exploration of these variables can aid in a better understanding of eating disorders.

It has been concluded in several studies, that the prevalence and manifestation of eating disorders can vary according to race. Standards of beauty, weight, and shape do differ among ethnic groups, influenced by biological and societal factors. Whether or not a woman of an ethnic group identifies with these standards affects her vulnerability to eating disorders. It is important to promote a standard of positive healthy attitudes toward body weight among all ethnic groups. In understanding how eating disorders differ across ethnic groups, parents and educators can make this possible. The socialization of women, White, African-American, Hispanic or Asian-American, impacts their susceptibility to eating disorders. With this knowledge, experts can better identify those who are in need and improve prevention, intervention and treatment for women of different ethnic groups (Croll et al. 963).

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## **Section III: The Humanities**

## When Langston was in Vogue

Stephanie Loffredo<sup>1</sup>

Upon his arrival to Harlem in 1921, Langston Hughes said, “At every subway station I kept watching for the sign: 135<sup>th</sup> Street. When I saw it, I held my breath... I went up the steps and into the bright September sunlight. Harlem! I looked around. Negroes everywhere! ... I took a deep breath and felt happy again” (Bremer 50).

Langston Hughes’ life began in 1902 in Joplin, Missouri and ended in 1967 in New York City. His life was filled with adventure, diversity and honor (Twayne’s 1). Through poems, stories, novels, lectures and various other literary forms, Hughes was able to illuminate his racial pride and truly become the most representative of African American writers of all time. He promoted equality and condemned racism and injustice and was key in celebrating black life and culture in the 1920s African American artistic movement called the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes was one of the most crucial writers and thinkers of the Harlem Renaissance and was deeply influenced by his time spent in New York City’s Harlem. Harlem provided Hughes with enormous inspiration which he used to gain a vast amount of cultural achievement. Overall, Langston Hughes was able to help shape African American literature and politics throughout several of his works including: *Good Morning, Harlem, What Happens to a Dream Deferred?* and *I, Too*.

When a woman in a box office at the only movie theater in Lawrence, Kansas pushed twelve year old Langston Hughes’ nickel back and pointed to a new sign, “Colored Not Admitted,” she inevitably began Langston’s life mission to reshape the world’s views on blacks (Twayne’s 1). By the time Hughes enrolled at Columbia University in New York in 1921, he had already committed himself to writing and launched his literary career with his poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (Rampersad 1). Because of the poem’s success, he was already well known in African American literature as a gifted young poet and continued to write. After he left Columbia in 1922, he supported himself with menial jobs, but also decided to travel abroad. He worked on a freighter in West Africa and even lived in Paris for several months. With these experiences, he managed to culturally grow and even learned the ways of hard work and manual labor. Later, he returned to the United States to attend the Lincoln University of Pennsylvania in 1924 (Rampersad 2). After buying a pack of cigarettes, he had only five

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written under the direction of Dr. Alison Smith (History) for the Freshman Learning Community LC1, *City and Civilization*.

cents left in his pocket (Rampersad 2). To make money he became a bus boy and then even worked behind a counter of a fish and oyster house. Langston Hughes was forced to work incessantly but he still found himself writing. His consistent strength of mind and utter determination kept him strong amid his struggles. During the same year, Hughes took several trips back to New York and met practically all the Negro writers who were prominent during the Harlem Renaissance (Twayne's 11). The excitement of the Harlem Renaissance shared the exuberance of the roaring twenties and lured Langston into its liveliness.

Langston Hughes' skin color and personal experiences with racial inequality led him to become a deeply influential writer of the Harlem Renaissance. In his book, *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, many of his poems reflect how strongly he felt about racial inequality and how he wanted to transform the minds of racists. In other words, Hughes was able to express the potency of his personal beliefs as well as his social beliefs. One element of this artistic composition is comprised of several kinds of poems reflecting a dream that remains unfulfilled. The unfulfilled dream is equality. A poem of Hughes' that is extremely significant during the 1920s of the Harlem Renaissance is *I, Too*. This poem expresses hope and optimism for the future. It begins with the line, "I, too, sing America" and reflects how an African American is forced to dine in seclusion (Langston 275). Yet, even in injustice and discrimination, the protagonist is particularly positive and even confident. He then explains what will become of him in the future. "Tomorrow, I'll be at the table When company comes. Nobody'll dare Say to me, 'Eat in the kitchen' Then. Besides, They'll see how beautiful I am And be ashamed." Possibly the most powerful line is the last one when he claims, "I, too, am America" (Langston 275). The final line shows that no matter an individual's skin color, the colored person is completely a part of America just as a white person is. This powerful poem is probably the most influential to African Americans of that time primarily because of its strength, potency and optimism. It also reveals how incredibly passionate Langston Hughes felt concerning racial equality.

Langston Hughes was not only able to influence others through his poems and politics, but also through a new revolutionary movement in black music. During the 1940s, "bebop" was introduced at a small nightclub on 52<sup>nd</sup> street in Harlem and grew out of a period that brought America out of the Great Depression and into another world war (Farrell 57). Hughes regarded bebop as a new type of jazz music that drew its strength and essence from a compound vernacular of black musical forms (Farrell 60). Hughes explains that many of his poems were designed to reflect the mood and cadence of bebop:

"In terms of current Afro-American popular music and the sources from which it had progressed, this poem on

contemporary Harlem, like be-bop, is marked by conflicting changes, sudden nuances, sharp and imprudent interjections, broken rhythms, and passages sometimes in the manner of the jam session, sometimes the popular song, punctuated by the riffs, runs, breaks, and distortions of the music of a community in transition” (Farrell 60).

Through bebop, Hughes was able to create a new technique in poetry that not only added a creative perk to his work, but was also able to convey an informative message to his audience about black life. According to an article written by both Walter C. Farrell and Patricia A. Johnson, “Hughes developed a form of poetry writing which would allow him to compress a wide and complex range of images into one kaleidoscopic impression of life in Harlem during the 1940s” (Farrell 62). Throughout his poetry collection entitled, *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, both social and political connotations are expressed revealing what black life was like during a time when they were still segregated and unaccepted (Farrell 63). Yet at the time, both blacks and whites were able to come together and enjoy the luxury of bebop and jazz. Because of this new eruption of music, the whites were becoming increasingly more interested in black culture. Although segregation and the Jim Crow Laws were still prominent, whites were beginning to appreciate some of the fresh and innovative creations that blacks had to offer during the 1920s.

With Langston Hughes’ new-found interest in the bebop world, he was able to express his views and political beliefs through poems and attract various audiences. Yet, this time, he was able to attract not only the blacks who could read and write, but also the ones who learned through music and song. He even had success in attracting a copious amount of white people as well. One poem entitled *Good Morning*, recounts a young boy’s observations of the growing African American populace in New York City. “I was born here, he said/ watched Harlem grow/ until colored folks spread/ from river/ across the middle of Manhattan/ out of Penn Station/ dark tenth of a nation” (Langston 269). It shows how African American culture was able to spread due to prevalent opportunities throughout New York City. It also exudes an evident be-bop rhythm with rhyming words and apparent tempo. Near the end of the short but amazing poem, the young boy continues to remark upon the interesting African American people and questions their motives. “I’ve seen them come dark/ wondering/ wide-eyed/ dreaming/ out of Penn Station-/ but the trains are late./ The gates open- Yet there’re bars/ at each gate. What happens/ to a dream deferred? Daddy, ain’t you heard?” (Langston 269). The rest of the poem conveys Langston’s idea that African Americans come to New York with hope and expectation, only to be held back by discrimination and bias. He then

questions, “What happens to a dream deferred?” meaning what happens to postponed equality?

In a poem entitled, *Harlem*, he basically re-evaluates this question and still does not answer it. Instead he intrigues his audiences and forces them to consider such a question by drawing their own conclusions. “What happens to a dream deferred?” He asks again. “Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. *Or does it explode?*” Langston Hughes accentuates this idea of a dream deferred by compelling his readers to reflect upon these ideas. Yet, no matter what, it is clear that Hughes addresses these questions to benefit New York City society by promoting racial equality and condemning discrimination. The city was beginning to change in the eyes of numerous Harlemites. According to Langston Hughes’ autobiographical account entitled, *The Big Sea* “..Some Harlemites thought the Millennium had come. They thought the race problem had at last been solved through Art plus Gladys Bentley. They were sure the New Negro would lead a new life from then on in green pastures of tolerance created by Countee Cullen and Bojangles.” (Twayne’s 14). Yet although the Harlem Renaissance had been the most prominent in New York City, Hughes still did not see a revolution of desegregation and the unification of blacks and whites occurring in the 1920s of the Harlem Renaissance. “I don’t know what made Negroes think that-- except that they were mostly intellectuals doing the thinking. The ordinary Negroes hadn’t heard of the Negro Renaissance. And if they had, it hadn’t raised their wages any” (Twayne’s 14). Langston Hughes’ speculations of the Harlem Renaissance were quite accurate. Most strikingly, desegregation wouldn’t completely occur for another forty years until the 1960s. Nevertheless, with Langston Hughes’ effect on New York City and New York City’s influence on Hughes, the Harlem Renaissance wouldn’t have been as successful as it was. The imperative burst of African American culture truly began a new life for the blacks of Harlem and the rest of America.

In conclusion, Langston Hughes’ poetry and many other works were able to shape both social and political trends of the time. He became the most influential writer of the Harlem Renaissance and played an important role in the bebop era. Through his bebop and poetry, he was able to reconcile blacks and whites for as long as the songs were played and boost the white people’s interest of African American culture. Without Harlem’s influence, it is relatively obvious that Hughes wouldn’t have been as powerful as he was. His creative genius was deeply shaped by his life in Harlem and led him to write powerful works that would change the lives of both blacks and whites. He forced people to observe social trends of the time and to re-evaluate their belief systems on equal opportunity, the depletion of segregation and most importantly freedom. In *Freedom’s Plow*, Langston Hughes metaphorically portrays freedom as a seed. “From that seed a tree grew, is growing, will ever grow. That tree is for everybody,/ For all

America, for all the world./ May its branches spread and its shelter grow/ Until all races  
and all peoples know its shade!”

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# **Learning to Live with Race, Social Class and Ethnicity in Down These Mean Streets by Piri Thomas**

Megan Benson<sup>1</sup>

Race, social class, and ethnicity generally do not come to mind as defining personal characteristics to a white middle class American. However, as a minority in the United States of America race, social class, and ethnicity direct every aspect of life. In Piri Thomas's autobiography, Down These Mean Streets, Thomas illustrates the prevalence of racism and discrimination due to social class and ethnicity on the streets of America. Having a fair-skinned mother from Puerto Rico and a dark-skinned father from Cuba, Piri grew up speaking Spanish and practicing Hispanic culture while at the same time attempting to assimilate into the American mainstream lifestyle and simultaneously fighting prejudice because he 'looked' African American. Down These Mean Streets offers an honest and explicit glance at Piri's life in El Barrio and how his struggle to find his identity through the shadows of racism, discrimination, and prejudice molded his personality and ultimately his life.

In 1941 the United States' economy was beginning a slow recovery in the midst of World War II; nevertheless areas such as the neighborhood in which Piri Thomas's family lived were still caught in a recession. Piri grew up in a lower class family that had to struggle every day simply to make ends meet. Piri's parents relied heavily on government aid as his father continually worked for the WPA and his mother collected goods from the Home Relief Office to support her family. Due to Piri's social class he learns to steal at a young age: "In Harlem stealing was like natural" (Thomas 72). Unfortunately the influence of his lower social class continues throughout Piri's life as he struggles to find his identity; theft offers Piri a sense of control and thus he maintains this practice throughout the book.

Piri spent a great deal of his childhood years growing up in El Barrio, Spanish Harlem. Even though Piri was around many different ethnicities while living on 111<sup>th</sup> Street, he was surrounded by people who, "acted, walked, and talked [like him]," (Thomas 24), thus not submitting him to a great deal of racial or ethnic discrimination. After losing a sibling to sickness brought about by germs in the neighborhood, Piri's family moved several streets up to 114<sup>th</sup> Street. The three streets that separated Piri from his former home introduced him to the racial, linguistic, and cultural borders that he

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written under the direction of Dr. Marilyn Kiss (Languages) for the Freshman Learning Community LC16, *The Spanish Connection*.

would spend many years trying to transcend. At home in El Barrio, no one questioned Piri's nationality; he spoke Spanish like everyone else so his dark skin tone was casually overlooked. However, the Italians on 114<sup>th</sup> street were not convinced by Piri's language: "what nationality are ya...he's black enough to be a nigger. Ain't that what you is kid?" (Thomas 24). From this moment on, Piri's race would constantly be in question, ultimately causing him to experience racism both as an African American and as a Hispanic American. This duality in Piri's life rightly changed his personality in that he now felt that he had to prove himself worthy of acceptance. When Piri's family relocated a second time back to Spanish Harlem on 104<sup>th</sup> Street, Piri made friends quickly but not without a fist fight: "But I knew I had first joined their gang when I cool-looked them on moving day. I was cool, man, I thought. I could've wasted Waneko any time. I'm good, I'm damned good, pure corazón. Viva me! Shit I had been scared, but that was over. I was in; it was my block now" (Thomas 51). Piri's violence served as a racial blindfold for himself and those around him; he spoke Spanish and could fight as well as the best of the gang thus giving him the "in."

In addition to fighting his own racial borders, the different places Piri had moved throughout his childhood brought about linguistic borders as well. Even though the cultures between Piri's different homes varied, they all spoke English on one level or another, consequently leading English to be the language spoken at school as well as on the street. Throughout the autobiography Thomas demonstrates his language barriers through repetition; a certain phrase will be repeated in his street language, language used at home, and the language used in school, "*I like broads, I like muchachas, I like girls*" (Thomas 61). Because Piri was struggling to find his own identity where he could use the language that suited him, repetition allowed him to incorporate each language at one particular moment.

Perhaps the most influential move during Piri's childhood was the move to Long Island. This move not only placed Piri's family amongst lower middle class families but also placed them in a predominantly white suburb where Piri's skin color overruled his ethnicity: "Are you Spanish?" I didn't know. 'I mean, you don't look like what I thought a Spaniard looks like'" (Thomas 83). After being confronted about his ethnicity at a school dance Piri felt more betrayed than ever; he wasn't Spanish, he was Hispanic, and to make matters worse the kids at the dance proceeded to describe Piri as, "that black thing" as well as, "that new colored boy" (Thomas 85). Piri's move to Long Island certainly exposed him to different groups of people; however, it also heightened his inner struggle with his racial duality. Prior to this event Piri had been experiencing a Freudian theory called repression regarding his inner conflict about his race:

In a situation of extreme mental conflict, in which someone experiences an instinctual impulse that is sharply incompatible with the standards the person



feels he or she must adhere to, it is likely that he or she will repress it, that is, put it out of consciousness, flee from it, pretend that it does not exist. Repression is one of the “defense mechanisms” by which a person attempts to avoid inner conflicts. (Stevenson and Haberman 158)

Following the incident at the school dance, Piri decided to return to Harlem in hopes of putting his racial conflicts to rest. Contrary to his hopes Piri only ran into more prejudice and discrimination with his return to el Barrio. No longer under the supervision of his parents, Piri had to find some means of income upon his return to Harlem. Upon entering the job market Piri found that even the professional world looked at his skin color rather than his ethnicity- he was turned down from jobs simply because he appeared to be African American.

In order to come to terms with his own racial duality, Piri takes a healing trip to the South as a way to connect with his newly adopted African American race: “‘It might just set me straight on a lotta things. Maybe I can stop being confused and come in on a right stick’” (Thomas 127). Before Piri could leave for the South he felt the need to overcome a mental barrier; he confronted his family about his skin color and the separation he felt from them: “‘you and James think you’re white, and I’m the only one that’s found out I’m not. I tried hard not to find out... I’m proud to be a Puerto Rican, but being Puerto Rican don’t make the color’” (Thomas 147). Piri’s defensiveness towards his family is not intended to be hostile; Piri is simply overwhelmed by conflict. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, a professor at the University of Kansas suggests that “‘Scenes of such defensiveness repeat themselves insistently...with an accumulative weight that suggests the enormity of pressures contributing to the construction of Piri’s racial/ethnic identity’” (211). Although Piri’s trip to the South taught him the intensity of racism in America, it also served as Piri’s first step in accepting his skin color. When Piri visited a brothel in Texas his sole objective was to, “‘Break out against this two-tone South; I wanted to fuck a white woman in Texas’” (Thomas 187). Piri leaves the brothel yelling, “‘you got fucked by a...*black man!*’” (Thomas 189). Piri’s realization that he can be Puerto Rican and have dark skin at the same time is monumental; however it installs extreme hatred within himself, “‘for anything white’” (Thomas 195).

Piri’s detestation of Caucasians leads him into a more severe inner conflict; he is separated racially from his family and thus has no one to depend on, consequently evoking substance dependence. Gloria Anzaldúa, the author of Borderlands La Frontera, suggests that Piri’s inner conflict with his identity and his problems with drugs can be explained by the fact that “‘The ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness’” (100). Thomas demonstrates this idea by writing about his own addiction to heroine.

Ultimately Piri’s addictions and illegal activities send him to prison after he is involved in shooting a police officer. Despite the fact that Piri’s time in prison in some ways took his freedom, it was in fact prison that lent Piri the creativity needed to escape from the world that led him there: ““I was learning another language, the language of positive thinking, and I began to write to find expression for what my life was all about”” (Thomas Interview). During the time Piri spent in prison he slowly found his identity through writing and religion: “There, in the semidarkness, I had found a new sense of awareness. I was down stud, and despite all my Bible lessons and trips into the world of the Big Man, it would take a lot of time to fully dig God; but at least I knew he was there” (Thomas 317). Through Piri’s search for himself and for a religion to depend on he also made the decision to make something of himself using this creativity and inner strength: “I’m tired of being half-past nothing...but you gotta learn how to invest in your own self” (Robinson 2001).

Looking back on Piri Thomas’s experiences in Down These Mean Streets one will discover that it is never too late for a person to change his or her life. From the streets of El Barrio, to years in prison to ultimately becoming a renowned author, Piri is grabbing life with both hands and showing people that it can be beautiful. Although writing his autobiography allowed Piri to, “see the sees, do the dos, hear the hears, and feel the feelings over and over again” (Thomas), and ultimately to heal the pains within himself, Piri’s creativity now serves as an outlet for many children who find themselves living Piri’s life all over again. He gives them hope that they too can overcome the barriers that race, ethnicity, and social class have set for them and through *their* creativity be able to smile at the world with nothing but love in their hearts.

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# **Rebekah: The Most Powerful Matriarch of Israel**

Abby Albair<sup>1</sup>

At first glance, the character of Rebekah may be seen as a young girl who is beautiful, kind and generous. While she is all these things, she is also very complex. Rebekah expresses her feelings and desires, leaves her home because she knows that it is God's will, makes known her anxiety over her difficult pregnancy and her son's marriage, and without thinking twice she inquires of God and He speaks to her. During her life Rebekah is completely dedicated to her husband Isaac and their sons Jacob and Esau. More importantly, Rebekah becomes the strongest matriarch of Israel and she plays the most significant role in securing the future of the nation (Jeansonne 69).

Rebekah is initially mentioned in Genesis as the first female offspring in a genealogical list of Nahor's, Abraham's brother. Nahor and his wife Milcah had eight sons: Uz, Buz, Kenuel, Kesed, Hazo, Phildash, Jidlah, and Bethuel, who was Rebekah's father. He also had Tebah, Gahom, Tahash, and Maacah by his concubine Reumah (Fretheim 501). It is made clear that Rebekah's father was the son of Milcah who is the wife of higher status. Also, the placement of this genealogy after the account of the testing of Abraham emphasizes that the next generation is about to become the focus, and therefore it emphasizes Rebekah's importance (Jeansonne 53). Another important fact made evident by this passage is that Isaac, son of Abraham, and Rebekah, daughter of Abraham's brother, come from the same family.

We actually meet Rebekah for the first time in Genesis 24. Abraham, who is getting very old and close to death, sends his servant to Aram Naharaim in Mesopotamia to find Isaac a wife from his own family. In the generations following Isaac and Rebekah, "the propriety of tribal offspring becomes a powerful indicator of the covenantal promise" (Visotzky 126). The servant prays to God to show him the woman who should be Isaac's bride. He asks God to make her known by her offering to give him and his camels water from her jug. When Rebekah comes out of her house and he asks her for a drink, she gives him one and also continues running uphill to fill her jug until all ten of his camels are no longer thirsty (Fretheim 505-508). The servant then explains his mission to Rebekah's father Bethuel and her brother Laban and they agree to let her go. When it is time for her to leave, they request that she be allowed to stay ten days longer,

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but Rebekah agrees to leave at once.

A classic “boy-meets-girl” theme runs through Genesis and Exodus as shown also in the meetings of Rachel and Jacob, and later Moses and Zipporah (Visotzky 126). However, Genesis 24, which is the story of the meeting of Isaac and Rebekah, is not like the others. Although an arranged marriage, it was not arranged by the parents. Rather the servant served as a mediator because of Abraham’s request that Isaac not leave the land of Canaan, and Laban, Rachel’s brother, appears to act in place of her father. From the very first time we see Rebekah her energetic spirit is made obvious. She quickly empties her jar and runs back and forth to the well “all verbs suggesting the she is hustling and in constant motion because of her generosity” (Armstrong 74).

Another interesting trait of Rebekah’s is her strong sense of independence and trust. Bethuel and Laban want their daughter and sister to stay with them longer, but when she is asked she says simply “I will go” (NRSV Gen 25:58). She is willing to leave her family and go to a strange land to marry a strange man because she feels it is the will of God. This is one of the times that one can see a parallel between Abraham and Rebekah rather than Abraham and Isaac. Rebekah continues that faithful response of leaving her family and her home land to answer God’s call (Fretheim 509). Also, her statement is significant because of evidence from Nuzi. The Nuzi texts record someone’s saying something like “Myself and my brother agree to this.” Here Rebekah makes the decision to leave by herself and makes her feelings known (Speiser 185).

When Rebekah and Abraham’s servant return to Canaan, Rebekah and Isaac fall in love at first sight. They go into Sarah’s tent and are married. Sarah had filled the role of one of the seven ancestors of the people of Israel (Jeansonne). The marriage in her tent foreshadows the important role of Rebekah as the mother of the next generation. Also, Isaac felt lost after the death of his mother and “when Rebekah comes he finds comfort, a surrogate, someone to give him direction” (Visotsky 129).

God did not relate easily with Isaac. Instead he chose to communicate with a woman, Rebekah, in the generation after Abraham. “Isaac’s wife and the most powerful of the matriarchs of Israel, had all the energy that her husband conspicuously lacked” (Armstrong 73). Genesis 25 is the story of the birth of Isaac and Rebekah’s two sons. At first, Rebekah was barren but Isaac prayed to the Lord for her and she became pregnant. It was a difficult pregnancy and Rebekah asked God why she should suffer so much. God said to her “two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger” (NRSV Gen 25:23). God directly informs Rebekah that two nations will come from her sons, and she understands that the younger one is destined to carry on the covenantal promise. When the boys are born, the first baby is covered with red hair. He is named Esau which means “rough one”. The second baby comes out holding his brother’s heel and therefore is

named Jacob, Yaakov in Hebrew, which means “heel holder” (Armstrong 75). However, some foreshadowing which can be seen in Jacob’s name is the fact that originally Jacob meant “may God protect”. When the pertinent verb went out of use all that remained was the connection with “heel” (Speiser 197). Isaac loves Esau better because he is the older, but Rebekah identifies with Jacob. God’s destiny for the boys may have had an impact on Rebekah’s feelings, or it could also be because Jacob is described as a man of integrity and Esau as a man of the field (Jeansonne 62). The most important part of this story is that Isaac is not informed of the boy’s destiny; God communicates this only with Rebekah. Now Rebekah takes on the responsibility of making sure that God’s blessing passes to the correct son. “Isaac who can scarcely be described as a memorable personality in his own right is important chiefly as a link in the patriarchal chain. Continuity is essential, but the vitality of the line will now depend on the woman who is to become Jacob’s mother” (Speiser 182).

In Genesis 26 there is a break from the story of Esau and Jacob. There is a brief story of a famine in the land. Isaac and Rebekah settle in Gerar. When Isaac is asked about Rebekah, he says she is his sister because he is afraid he will be harmed by Philistine men who think she is beautiful. This shows that Isaac does not trust God’s assurance and considers only his own welfare when he calls Rebekah his sister. Rebekah is silent through this entire story, which is a stark contrast from the strong and independent woman seen earlier in Genesis (Von Rad 266). The king of the Philistines, Abimelech, discovers the truth, but despite the fact that he was tricked, he protects the couple from the people. So even though Isaac did not trust God he is protected from his own foolishness. Rebekah is also protected from the abuse she could have suffered, just as Sarah could have as a result of her husband’s same fear in Genesis 12 (Frethheim 526). Because Isaac deceived Abimelech, the deception by his own wife, which follows this story, is not surprising.

In Genesis 27, Isaac prepares to give his deathbed blessing to his son Esau. He tells Esau to go and prepare him meat to eat and he will bless him. Like Sarah who listened at the door and heard the revelation of her child who would fulfill God’s promise, Rebekah listens at the entrance to what Isaac says and immediately takes action to make sure that the correct son will be blessed (Jeansonne 66). She tells Jacob everything that Isaac says; she hides no details and is very authoritative as evidenced by her own command, “Hearken to my voice” (NRSV Gen 27:8). She tells Jacob to bring her two kids from the goats and she prepares them the way Isaac likes them. She acts quickly and without pause. Isaac has gone blind in his old age, so Rebekah knows it will not be too difficult to pass Jacob off as his brother. While Jacob gets the goats, she takes Esau’s clothes so that Jacob will smell like him. She also prepares animal skins for Jacob to put on his arms so that when Isaac touches him he will feel hairy like Esau (Frethheim

531). When Jacob protests, she says, “Upon me be your curse, my son” (NRSV Gen 27:13). This is a sign of Rebekah’s passionate love for her son. In Leviticus 19:14, there is a prohibition against taking advantage of a blind man, but Rebekah knows she must deceive her husband to ensure God’s will is carried out (Von Rad 272).

The story of the blessing poses a moral problem. Both Hosea and Jeremiah allude to Jacob’s treatment of Esau with disapproval (Speiser 211). However, Rebekah’s role was even more significant than Jacob’s. He acted with uneasiness under his mother’s pressure. Although one might sympathize with the way Isaac was deceived and Esau was cheated out of his blessing, “She does not act unfairly to Esau or Isaac, but skillfully completes the task initiated by God” (Jeansonne 67). Although tradition says the older son is preferential in inheritance, the legacy is established by the divine covenant; so with the approval of Yahweh transfer of the deathbed blessing is allowed (Speiser 213). No information to account for Rebekah’s actions is given because her motivation is not deliberately elaborated. However, it is not surprising that Rebekah ensures that the son singled out by God receives the proper blessing. Because of the birth oracle, Rebekah knows that Jacob is God’s chosen one. God communicated only with Rebekah, and so it is her job to make sure Jacob is the one who carries on the promise. It is not known why she uses deception instead of some other method to accomplish her goals, but she is only one of many biblical figures who does so (Jeansonne 66). Deception is a very present theme in Genesis beginning with Adam and Eve and continuing through the characters of Abraham, Rebekah, Leah, Potiphar’s wife, Lot’s daughters, and others. Some scholars view the deceptions in Genesis as less of a historical issue and more of a literary motif used by the author. Although the narrator is not explicit, some scholars think the many references to deception by female characters stereotype women as untrustworthy. However, other scholars believe it simply shows that deception is used by powerless characters and is not limited to women (Jeansonne 67). So Rebekah may have used deception instead of some other means because she felt powerless in a patriarchal society. Regardless, in the end her deception only furthers the divine plan. Ultimately in the human struggle for the blessing of the dying Isaac, divine plans are being worked out (Von Rad 275). Although Rebekah did favor Jacob, she does not take away Esau’s blessing to hurt him, for he was also her son and she did love him. However, she was the matriarch of Israel and knew the burden of ensuring the destiny of both her sons and of the nation rested with her. “This account is so important for an understanding of the role of Rebekah and her characterization the Genesis narrative shows that Rebekah acted decisively to ensure that Isaac’s blessing was awarded to the son designated by God to carry on the promise” (Jeansonne 67).

When Esau learns that his blessing has been stolen, Rebekah must protect Jacob again. Esau plans in anger to kill his brother, and so Rebekah decides to send Jacob to her

brother Laban so that he can protect him. Genesis 27:41-45 and Genesis 27:46-28:9 are two different episodes which describe why Jacob was sent away. Their placement suggests that they are to be read as two scenes of one event. In the first Rebekah sends Jacob away because she is afraid Esau will kill him. In the second there is a description of how Rebekah gets Isaac to allow Jacob to leave. She tells Isaac that she wants Jacob to go find a wife from her origins and not marry a Canaanite woman. In Genesis 26, Esau had married two Hittite women and the story says that these women were a source of grief for his parents (Fretheim 529). When he is sent for this reason, not only does he escape Esau, but Rebekah avoids a conflict with Isaac. Also, Jacob's leaving for this reason prompts an additional blessing from Isaac who says to his son, "May He give the blessing of Abraham to you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojourning which God gave to Abraham!" (NRSV Gen 28:4). Now it is definite that Jacob is the inheritor of the promise of God.

After her role in the blessing of Jacob, the rest of Rebekah's life is not mentioned. Jacob later says that she and Isaac are buried in the cave of Machpelah (NRSV Gen 49:31), but as far as accounts of her life, her part in the Biblical narrative is over. It is not surprising that information about her life ends after the blessing for Jacob has been obtained. "She has made continuation of Abraham and Sarah's line possible and has ensured that God's blessing will be continued through the son that God chose" (Jeansonne 68).

Rebekah is an intricate and crucial character in Israel's history. For her part, she is more important than Isaac because she determines that the promise of Abraham is fulfilled. The presentation of her character "shows that women in Israel can be viewed as persons who could make crucial decisions about futures, whose prayers were acknowledged, who might have known better than men what God designed, and who could appropriately take the steps necessary to support God's plans for the community" (Jeansonne 69). Rebekah is the strongest matriarch in Israel's history and one of the first women with whom God has direct communication. She is a strong and independent woman, and most importantly she assists in the fulfillment of the covenantal promise of land, descendants, and blessing of the future.



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## **Savory Sentiments: Feelings Expressed Through Food in Abu Jaber's Crescent**

Emily Morrison<sup>1</sup>

Food and cooking are integral to Diana Abu-Jaber's Crescent. Charlotte Innes of The Nation comments that, "Clearly Abu-Jaber feels passionately about food and has thought deeply about its philosophical implications" (par. 2). It is easy to say that Abu-Jaber personally knows the importance of food because she does an excellent job of conveying the significance of food and cooking in the lives of her characters. Food is often the background for many events in the novel because they take place in Nadia's Café, in a kitchen, or in a dining room. Food is vital to the novel because it forms bonds between the characters and creates relationships. The characters come together for meals, creating a 'fellowship of food.' The act of cooking often has the same effect: the central relationship in the novel commences over the art of making baklava. Throughout the novel, the characters show affection by giving gifts of edibles and cooking for each other. In the same way that food is a way of showing love, students and customers at the café love Sirine because of her ability to cook such wonderful dishes. Being a cook, Sirine obviously thinks food is important and she is able to use it as a way to relax and take her mind off the problems that she faces in her personal life. For the many characters in the novel who are immigrants to the United States, food reminds them of their home and culture. They are immigrants from areas of the Middle East and cuisine is a large part of Middle Eastern culture. However, food evokes not only memories of a place but also memories of people. Both Han and Sirine think of their parents while cooking certain things. Interestingly, food is also a way of showing absence in the novel; however overall food brings with it good memories and forms close bonds.

Nadia's Café is the meeting place for many of the students and teachers. The students come from many different countries, but they come together at the restaurant to socialize, be in the company of Sirine and Um-Nadia, and to enjoy the Arabic menu. The restaurant becomes a type of 'hang out' and haven for the college students who are away from home. Many of the students are immigrants from a variety of countries throughout the Middle East. The food that they are served at the café reminds them of their homes, cultures, and families, especially their mothers.

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As stated by Louise DeSalvo and Edvige Giunta in The Milk of Almonds Italian American Women Writers on Food and Culture, they wrote their book on food because of their, “recognition of its cultural power and of women’s historical role as food-makers” (1). Food is a cultural marker, and in America eating traditional foods is a way for the immigrants to celebrate their culture. Abu-Jaber says, “For many of them the café was a little flavor of home” (22). Food is often related to home because traditionally many mothers prepare meals for their children in the home, and as a child people form an attachment between nourishment and home and nourishment and their mothers. Also meal times are generally times spent with family. Even when members of a family may not see each other throughout the entire day, many families start the day together by eating breakfast and end the day together by eating dinner. The entrees served at the café could be described as ‘comfort food’ for the majority of the customers. Families.com states that “the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary added "comfort food" to its list of 1997 entries, defining it as ‘food that comforts or affords solace; hence any food (frequently with a high sugar or carbohydrate content) that is associated with childhood or with home cooking’” (par. 1).

The tie between food and a motherly figure also contributes to the fact that the customers at the café are naturally drawn to Sirine. She cooks for them like their mothers used to do, and they feel a certain affection for her. She helps to bring a piece of home to them in a foreign country by serving the traditional cuisine of their homelands. The author describes how the men are drawn to her:

Only the men spend their time arguing and being lonely, drinking tea and trying to talk to Um-Nadia, Mireille, and Sirine. Especially Sirine. They love her food - the flavors that remind them of their homes...She is so kind and gentle-voiced and her food is so good that the students cannot help themselves - they sit at the table, leaning toward her. (19)

Food and cooking are important not only to the customers, but also to Sirine who has been a chef nearly all of her life. For her, cooking is a way to unwind, and she enjoys getting lost in the act: “The back kitchen is Sirine’s retreat, her favorite place to sit at a table chopping carrots and thinking her thoughts” (65). By working at Nadia’s Café making traditional Middle Eastern dishes, and as a result, surrounding herself by other people from a similar background, food is one of Sirine’s strongest ties to her Arabic culture.

More importantly, cooking these foods also reminds her of her parents. Her parents are now deceased and were often away from home while she was growing up. Despite their absence, some of Sirine’s most vivid and fond memories of her parents are of them cooking together and of them cooking with her. When Sirine first started at

Nadia's Café she, "went through her parents' old recipes and began cooking the favorite-but almost forgotten-dishes of her childhood. She felt as if she were returning to her parents' tiny kitchen and her earliest memories" (22). Sirine can clearly remember Sunday mornings when her mother and father would make baklava. They made it together carefully, moving around each other in the kitchen as if dancing, and it was watching this intricate art of making baklava that she recognized her parents' love for each other. Ever since Sirine has placed a certain value on baklava, making sure that even when she really does not have time to make it, she makes time because she knows that not only she, but also the students love the delicious dessert. She then shares this special process of making baklava with Han.

Although Sirine and Han have previously met, the real love connection is made while Sirine teaches Han how to make baklava just like her parents had taught her. Knowing that Sirine's parents' love was shown through baklava, Han and Sirine making baklava is foreshadowing of the love that will form in their relationship. They bond over making food together, and also cook for each other as a way of showing affection. Han cooks for Sirine on two separate occasions. First, he makes what is considered a typical American meal showing how he respects her American side by giving her what he thinks she wants as an American. The second time that he cooks for her, it is as a surprise because she has been working so hard and is run down. Han expresses his love for Sirine in this way because being a chef herself she can appreciate a well cooked meal and know the time, energy, and care that went into it. For Han, Sirine often makes special late night treats after all of the others customers have left the café.

There are also several instances in the novel where they physically feed each other. During both meals that Han has made he feeds Sirine from his hand, an action that is often thought of as being extremely intimate: "Han fills Sirine's plate and feeds her a morsel of lamb from his fingers, as if food is their private language" (299). They also share an apricot together, and the imagery of juiciness and sweetness that accompany eating fruit flows from the novel. Abu-Jaber describes the lovers sharing the fruit: "He takes a bite and puts his hand over hers as she takes a bite, the velvety peel and fruit sugar filling her whole mouth" (125). Abu-Jaber does an excellent job of conveying the closeness of a couple eating from each other's hands.

Sirine cooks for Han and for the customers at the café on a regular basis, but she prepares a special Thanksgiving meal for her uncle, the employees of the café, some of the students, Han, Nathan, and Aziz. She spends an entire day fixing the dishes, showing that cooking is a type of labor that takes time and effort in order to make the food well. As a gift to Han, she makes this Thanksgiving full of the dishes that remind Han of his life in Iraq. Even outside of the café, once again, food is able to bring the characters together. In an interview with Renee Montagne of Morning Edition, Abu-Jaber says,

“You know, I would rather feed someone because I do feel that you can’t help but have a kind of insight that comes, not only intellectually but also emotionally and physically, from that experience of breaking bread together” (2). Obviously not only in the novel but also in her personal life, Abu-Jaber feels that eating together forms a unique connection among the people involved.

This gift of cooking is more often heard of today as more and more couples prepare meals for each other, but in the novel, both cooking and food items are gifts. Sirine is constantly receiving gifts of edibles from Han. He often buys her exotic fruits and vegetables as presents. After the night that Han stormed out of Nathan’s exhibit, he sends her a basket of beautiful apples as an apology instead of the traditional bouquet of flowers. He asks her, “So you like it? The basket of apples? I saw them at the farmer’s market and thought they were prettier than roses” (293). Food and cooking as gifts in this novel are extremely important in the relationships of the characters, as they are to many people. In Food, Consumption & the Body in Contemporary Women’s Fiction, Sarah Sceats explains:

From infants’ sticky offerings to anniversary chocolates, from shared school lunch boxes to hospital grapes, the giving of food is a way of announcing connection, goodwill, love. For friends, food may be an expression of support or an invitation to celebrate; for lovers there is an intimate, sexual subtext, appetite incorporated into sexuality. (19)

Although the majority of the time food and cooking in the novel mean love, home, family, and unity, there are times in the text in which they are also used to show loneliness, absence, and guilt. For Nathan and Sirine, at times food only reminds them of the people that are missing in their lives. Nathan and Sirine have both lost lovers at some point in the book. Nathan had fallen in love with Han’s sister in Iraq, but she was arrested and Nathan was forced to leave the country. He is so heartbroken over losing her that ever since returning to America he has lost his appetite. He no longer finds joy or comfort in good food like the rest of the characters. Sirine stops eating after her affair with Aziz because she is so stricken with guilt over what she has done. After Han leaves, food no longer tastes good to her. Abu-Jaber describes this: “everything tastes like wet cotton to her” (343). Loss of appetite is not an uncommon symptom of people experiencing loss and depression. Depression.com gives, “a change in appetite, with significant weight loss or weight gain” to be one of the main signs of depression (par. 2).

Sirine’s Uncle also feels the void in his life of never having that special someone to share meals with. He tells Sirine, “It’s a lonely business, eating alone. I never met someone that I was meant to eat my dinners with” (303). In the same way that food can evoke good emotions, it can just as quickly bring painful ones. For Han, food

reminds him of his home and family but can also remind him of the pain surrounding his exile, and the fact that he will never be able to live in his home with his family again. Many people exiled from their home can understand this relationship between food and exile. Carol Bardenstein in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 2002 writes about Claudia Roden's experience of exile: "She situates her engagement with food and cookbook-writing both as a result of being in exile ... and the 'fruit of nostalgic longing' for the food of a world from which she had been absented" (353).

Food and cooking in the novel Crescent represent love, home, family, culture, and at times absence. The food and cooking enhance the themes and relationships in the novel. It is especially important to the development of the central love story between Hanif and Sirine. Their love grows over the art of making baklava, cooking for each other, and giving each other gifts of food. Although food is not their only tie to each other it is certainly one of the strongest. Also for many of the students, professors, and members of the surrounding community Nadia's Café is a home away from home. Many of the customers' homes are continents away from Los Angeles, and the food served at the café reminds them of their homes. The food also reminds them of their culture since food is one of the strong culture identifiers, especially in the Middle Eastern culture. Claudia Roden writes in the magazine Saudi Aramco World: "Great value is attached to cooking in the Middle East" (par. 1). Not only for the immigrants, but also for Sirine and Han, food makes them think of their families, especially mothers. As infants people form a connection between their mothers and food, and perhaps this connection is why many of the customers at the café are so fond of Sirine. They associate her with their mothers because she cooks for them. Just as easily as food arouses pleasant emotions, it can also cause pain and show loss. Nathan, Sirine, Han, and Sirine's uncle all experience the negative side of food. Food can remind them of lost family, lost lovers, or the lover that they never had. Overall, Abu-Jaber makes food and cooking central in the novel and uses gastronomic imagery to connect the themes of absence, exile, Middle Eastern culture, and a love story.

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## **Section IV: Performing and Visual Arts**

## Bach and the *Art of the Fugue*

Christopher Fourman<sup>1</sup>

Toward the end of his career Bach wrote his most profound and monumental compositions. These works include *The Musical Offering*, *St. Matthew Passion*, and *The Art of the Fugue*. Bach's most mysterious and one of his most beautiful compositions, *The Art of the Fugue*, culminates both his career and, in a sense, the art of contrapuntal technique.

Bach masterfully employed contrapuntal technique, and in *The Art of the Fugue* brought fugal composition into the world view (Bach 210).

In Latin fuge means "flight" or to "take flight" and Bach possessed a great ability to compose music using counterpoint and chromatics to provide a sense of "flight" in his music (*Art of the Fugue*). Though Bach was a master in many other forms of music, counterpoint and fugal composition were the style that suited him best. In Bach's time, fugues, rather than canzone and ricercari, were just beginning to gain popularity. In fact, once Bach's compositions were discovered, the music world was astonished by the use of chromatics, multiple voices, and extensive variations upon a common subject. Bach's impressive fugues, particularly in the *Art of the Fugue*, resulted in an increased appreciation of his music, the fugue in particular.

Fugal compositions can be relatively simple or amazingly complex, yet they almost always follow several basic principles (Bach 212-15). A fugue is a form of musical composition that utilizes counterpoint, a technique of involving several musical lines at once. An example of counterpoint is the round, used in American folk songs like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" (Counterpoint). Counterpoint utilizes the interaction of independent melodic voices to create depth and musical ideas, whereas a simple melodic voice can only make a particular impression. Yet when one melodic voice is written in variations and combined in various ways, amazing depth of meaning are developed in the composition (Counterpoint)(Bach 216). Counterpoint was Bach's way to develop musical ideas and to reveal to the listener another dimension of musical possibilities.

The basis of counterpoint is relatively simple: the use of independent musical lines interacting with each other to create musical subjects and content in a composition (Counterpoint). However, Bach takes counterpoint to a new level in his compositions, creating intense and intricate themes that transform through the entirety of the piece. His

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impressive use of counterpoint is especially apparent in *Art of the Fugue*. However, despite the intricacy, the underpinnings of this great composition are parallel with the basic concepts of counterpoint.

Usually a fugue begins with a short theme called a subject sounding alone. Next, a second part enters sounding the subject while the first part continues with a countersubject. This entering of subject and countersubject continues until all voices have stated the theme. The fugue continues development of the theme using methods such as inversion, augmentation, and diminution to distinguish meaning in the music (Counterpoint). Bach uses this fugal model in the *Art of the Fugue* fourteen times. The composition consists of fourteen fugues and four canons that are all based upon the same theme in the key of D minor.

In Contrapunctus I, the first fugue in the *Art of the Fugue*, Bach introduces a subject, a short series of notes, that over the course of the next fourteen fugues and four canons will be varied upon 120 times in major and minor ways. To create variations on the common *Art of the Fugue* theme, Bach uses several compositional tools like diminution and inversion. As the theme grows more and more complex throughout each Contrapunctus in the *Art of the Fugue*, Bach begins utilizing more complex fugal forms such as counter fugue, stretto fugue, double or triple fugue, or mirror fugue. Moreover, the fugal forms and progression of the common theme organize the *Art of the Fugue* into movements or sections (Pipedreams).

The first of four sections in the *Art of the Fugue* contains Contrapunctus I through Contrapunctus IV, and like the other three sections, it is completed by a canon. As previously stated, Bach introduces a simple theme in the first fugue. Over the next three fugues he develops the theme and uses variations of it beginning a reoccurring action throughout the piece. For instance, Bach uses a simple rhythm change to vary the theme in Contrapunctus II, and in Contrapunctus III Bach inverts (turns upside down and notes move in opposite direction) the main theme. Contrapunctus IV inverts the theme in a different manner by focusing on the fifth note in the scale of D minor, A, rather than the D which was previously the focal note. Also, the *Art of the Fugue* takes on a new characteristic in this section, virtuosity, by combining the elements of Contrapunctus I, II, and III into the content of Contrapunctus IV. This combination of compounding elements is also a reoccurring action that Bach uses throughout the piece. However, as the number of elements accrues, the difficulty and complexity of the composition does as well.

The next section of the *Art of the Fugue* contains Contrapunctus V through Contrapunctus VII. Here Bach introduces a new style of fugue, the stretto fugue. The stretto fugue merely adds to the complexity and the intensity of the piece by introducing a second voice before the first voice has completed stating the initial theme. Also, all three

of the fugues in the section are “counter fugues,” meaning the variation of the main theme is inverted (Boyd 25).

Beginning with Contrapunctus V, Bach begins a procedure to make the *Art of the Fugue* an extremely intricate composition. Here, Bach takes up a similar theme from the first section and manages to vary the theme in eleven different ways. To create a feeling of fanfare, Bach replicates the theme against itself by using timed entries of the subject and the start of the answer (Boyd 25). Bach again uses this technique of numerous variations and timed entries in Contrapunctus VI. Bach also introduces another compositional tool called diminution where the value of each note is decreased by one-half in value, doubling the speed of the music. Furthermore, slower moving variations of the main theme overlap with the diminished variations adding an interesting characteristic to this section. Lastly, in Contrapunctus VII, the last fugue of the second section in the *Art of the Fugue*, Bach takes his variance a step further and employs the opposite of diminution, augmentation. This fugue consists of a battle between normal versions of the theme and longer versions (Pipedreams).

While the first two sections of the *Art of the Fugue* consist of seven fugues focusing on the variation of one single theme, Bach introduces multiple counter themes in the next seven fugues to further complicate and intensify the composition. This section consists of double and triple fugues that consist of the original organic theme and either one counter theme (double fugue) or two counter themes (triple fugue). Although it seems the numerous parts would conflict, the greatness of Bach shines through to tie the various themes together (Pipedreams).

Contrapunctus VIII begins with two entirely new themes developing fully. Before the original theme is even introduced in this fugue, there are two separate themes already occurring. The three themes, two new and one organic, make Contrapunctus VIII a triple fugue, and Bach unbelievably manipulates them into one common theme. Again, the ability to do such things with so many elements was almost unprecedented at the time and even today the *Art of the Fugue* is a wonder to those who study it.

Contrapunctus IX and Contrapunctus X are similar in nature. Both are double fugues that employ a new theme and the original *Art of the Fugue* theme. Both use a compositional technique called double counterpoint where the upper and lower parts switch registers with each other. The only difference in these two fugues lies in the inverted main theme in Contrapunctus X, whereas it is in its normal upright form in Contrapunctus IX.

The eleventh fugue, the last fugue in the third section, utilizes an astonishing seven themes. The two themes developed in the first three fugues of the section, along with the original organic theme, are employed in both their upright and inverted forms making three themes with two variations of each (Boyd 24). The seventh theme is a

legendary Bach signature theme that has brought upon much controversy and speculation among musicians. Entwined in the eleventh fugue is a theme using the pitches B-flat, A, C, and B which in German letter notation correspond to the letters B-A-C-H (*Art of the Fugue*). Bach created and successfully implemented a theme using notes corresponding to the letters of his own name. This legendary signature and Bach's ability to incorporate numerous themes and all of their variations into the same composition leave those who encounter the *Art of the Fugue* astonished. Though it seems the piece has climaxed here, the next section of fugues is just as important to the whole.

The last section of fugues entails three fugues distinguished as "mirror fugues" (Boyd 24). This section is an unleashing of sheer compositional mastery. In each of these mirror fugues, there are two fugues, each an exact opposite of the other. If one fugal line moves up a scale, the other moves down, and the entire mirror fugue is inverted in this manner. Bach is forced to bring out his most creative resources in this section because everything must be designed with its opposite, or inversion, in mind. In all, Bach manages six types of mirrors, an astonishing feat considering the stringent restrictions of the mirror fugue technique (Smith).

Contrapunctus XII, the first fugue in the last section, uses the mirror fugue technique centered around the main *Art of the Fugue* theme. However, this fugue is written in three-four time, the only fugue in the piece composed in this meter (Bach 24). Next, Contrapunctus XIII returns to the original meter, and again the main theme is the subject, only the subject is inverted. Basically, Contrapunctus XIII is a mirror image of Contrapunctus XII, and both are already mirror fugues in themselves. Although it would seem Bach finally took on more than he could handle with two mirror fugues complementing the reciprocal of one another and the successful implementation of three themes in one fugue, the last fugue brings forth one of the most legendary endings in all of musical composition (Boyd 24).

The most perplexing characteristic of the *Art of the Fugue* is the manner in which the piece ends. Obviously intended to be the crowning jewel of his final masterpiece, Bach intended Contrapunctus XIV to be a quadruple fugue, a four-part fugue integrating all of the themes in their normal and inverted forms (Boyd 24). However, only three subjects are introduced in the first two sections. Then, there occurs a series of notes seemingly impossible for one person to play on a keyboard. Following this series, as he did in Contrapunctus XI, Bach masked within the musical notation the letters B-A-C-H (Bach 222). Following this unusual signature by Bach, the piece abruptly ends mid-song in measure 239 with no warning or structural reason. Written in the margins surrounding the abrupt ending is the statement, "At the point where the composer introduces the name *BACH* in the countersubject to this fugue, the composer died." Scholars know today by matching writing samples that Bach's son Carl Philipp

Emanuel wrote these words in the margin. Nonetheless they too are a mysterious aspect (Bach 224). Combined, the signature of Bach in musical notation, the explanation in the margins, and the abrupt ending have perplexed all who know of the *Art of the Fugue*. Because of this uncharacteristic “finale,” there is a great deal of uncertainty, speculation, and mystery shrouding the piece.

The note from Bach’s son in the margin of the last measure would indicate Bach died as he was finishing the *Art of the Fugue*. However, studies are definitive that the romantic story of Bach dying pen in hand as he scribbled frantically is untrue. In fact, scholars believe that the *Art of the Fugue* was mostly completed by 1742, eight years before Bach’s death in 1750 (Boyd 24). An original manuscript in Bach’s own hand containing eleven of the fourteen fugues in the entirety of the *Art of the Fugue* as it is published today was recovered. Moreover, the dates on the manuscript indicate that Bach had already completed or was in the middle of writing the piece before 1742 making the *Art of the Fugue* more of a life work rather than a last testament. Also, during the last years of Bach’s life, he had trouble with his eyesight. Since almost all of the manuscripts are in his hand, they must have been written before Bach had eye problems .

All evidence points to Bach finishing work on the *Art of the Fugue* long before his death, which leads to questions that maybe Bach did not leave the piece unfinished. Therefore, Bach may well have finished the fourteenth fugue leading to speculation on possible causes for the last section to be missing (Bach 224). First, there is the argument that the fourteenth fugue does not actually belong to the *Art of the Fugue* and was inadvertently put there by Bach’s executors after his death or was casually added when the entire piece was published posthumously in 1751. The reasoning behind this hypothesis is that the common theme inherent within the other thirteen fugues is undeveloped and does not exist in the fourteenth (Bach 224). Another theory that blames the ignorance of Bach’s executors as the cause of the unfinished fugue is that the fourteenth fugue was in fact finished, but came up missing in the confusion of all the manuscripts of his life’s work. Adding to the credibility of this thought are three fugues included in the published version of 1751 that were not included in the 1742 version. The original manuscript included 11 fugues. However, it did not include the fourth or thirteenth fugue of the published edition leading scholars to believe that Bach wrote the fourth, thirteenth, and fourteenth fugues to be part of the final and complete *Art of the Fugue* (Bach 224). A more controversial view that has arisen in the last two decades is that Bach intentionally left the fourteenth fugue unfinished to serve as a musical puzzle for other musicians and scholars to guess a conclusion or create their own. This theory would have fit well into a time when keyboardists would challenge each other on keyboard in fugal contests (Pipedreams). One competitor would start a fugue and then stop playing to allow the challenger an opportunity to develop and carry out a main

theme. Although this theory of the last fugue being a musical puzzle or a challenge to musicians is highly unlikely, many people have taken it to heart and tried their hand at finishing Bach's *Art of the Fugue*.

The *Art of the Fugue* is traditionally performed by a small ensemble of solo instruments which would consist of strings or a mix of strings and winds. More recently, people have theorized that Bach wrote the *Art of the Fugue* for the keyboard. Still others believe that the piece is actually meant to be the third volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. While there may be much debate over what instrument Bach intended the *Art of the Fugue* to be performed on, musicians the world over do not seem to notice as they give their own interpretation on instruments from the organ to the lute.

Bach certainly composed a wonderful piece of music. The music's beauty combined with the mystery that shrouds the piece makes Bach's *Art of the Fugue* the supreme culmination to his wondrous career, and the attention it has received speaks volumes to that effect. Oftentimes, people are emotionally paralyzed by the passionate and spirited fugal composition that builds and builds until it abruptly ends in mid song. The *Art of the Fugue* seems to employ all of Bach's genius, and his finesse in the contrapuntal technique is unprecedented. Bach created a legendary composition that is extremely powerful and influential even today, in world much different than his own.

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**Section V:  
Professional Programs**

# **The Boy Scouts of America and the Battle to Keep out Gays**

Allen Koehler<sup>1</sup>

In America, we hold our values close and pride ourselves for doing what is right. We expect our organizations and clubs we send our children to to hold such pride as well and we expect acceptance, openness and tolerance to be a quality they possess. One of America's most popular and largest organizations is the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America, or BSA, is known for its community service, summer camps, and advancement in leadership. With an organization that started in 1910 in America, and years before in England, the BSA has set principals for the young man dressed in khaki and green. However, over the past few years, BSA has come under fire because of their policy of not allowing homosexuals in their organization. Not only has the BSA come under fire in the media, but it has been scrutinized in court as well. However, our judicial system has sided with the Boy Scouts. This is permitted because the Boy Scouts are a private organization and are not held legally under the same rules as a public organization.

Supporters, like the Mormons, have continued to back BSA, but some companies and individuals have stepped away from the organization because of this issue. A problem also arises because BSA is considered a private organization, and therefore they should not receive donations or aid from the government. This is not the case as the Boy Scouts of America receive millions of dollars from the government at the taxpayers' expense. Scouts and leaders alike are split on the issue and are not sure which direction to take. Due to BSA's policy towards homosexuals, the government needs to stop funding this private organization and the Boy Scouts of America need to take an immediate step towards accepting homosexuals and being an ethical organization. But what will change? The future of the Boy Scouts of America is one that will be watched closely by many individuals. The dwindling number of scouts across the country and the tolerant society America has become will definitely play a role in the future of the organization.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written under the direction of Dr. Mary Lo Re (Business) for the Freshman Learning Community 18, *Business, Politics and Ethics*.

## I. History of the BSA

### *The Boy Scout Slogan: “Do A Good Turn Daily”*

The Boy Scouts of America had an interesting start 95 years ago. However, before the Scouting organization would sprout in the U.S.A., its wide roots were spreading throughout Britain. It started when “Sir Robert Baden-Powell, after returning to his country a hero following military service in Africa, found boys reading the manual he had written for his regiment on stalking and survival in the wild” (BSA). Taking this event and rewriting his book in a nonmilitary style, Baden-Powell began to form the organization of Scouting in Britain, named His Majesties Scouts<sup>2</sup>. The organization spread quickly and with great zeal.



Sir William Baden-Powell, founder of Boy Scouts in England (Hiawathaland Council)

One day, William D. Boyce, a Chicago publisher, was in London on business. In a fairytale event, Boyce was lost in dense fog and stumbled across a young boy. Boyce approached the boy and told him he was lost and asked for help. The boy led Boyce out of the fog and to where he needed to be. When Boyce went to tip the boy for his help, the boy said that he could not. Boyce asked the boy why, and the boy responded with the fact that he is a Boy Scout and he is just doing a good turn. It was this precedent and way of thinking that instilled the idea of paying the gesture forward instead of paying it back. Once returning to the States, Boyce quickly went into action and established the Boy Scouts of America.

Immediately after its incorporation, the BSA was assisted by officers of the YMCA in organizing a task force to help community organizations start and maintain a

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<sup>2</sup> At that point in time, the organization was named “His Majesties Scouts” due to the fact that the person in charge was a King. If it was a Queen, the name would have changed to “Her Majesties Scouts.” Today, the Boy Scouts in England are called “Scout Section” and “Explorer Scouts,” based on age.

high-quality Scouting program. Those efforts climaxed in the organization of the nation's first Scout camp at Lake George, New York, directed by Ernest Thompson Seton. Beard, who had established another youth group, the Sons of Daniel Boone (which he later merged with the BSA), provided assistance. Also on hand for this historic event was James E. West, an advocate of children's rights, who would become the first professional Chief Scout Executive. Seton became the first volunteer national Chief Scout, and Beard, the first national Scout commissioner (BSA). It was with these individuals that started what is to become the largest youth organization in America.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Scout Law</u></b><br/>Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient,<br/>Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, Reverent</p> |
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## **II. BSA Today**

Boy Scouting, one of the traditional membership divisions of the BSA, is available to boys who have earned the Arrow of Light Award<sup>3</sup> and are at least 10 years old, or have completed the fifth grade and are at least 10 years old, or who are 11 but not yet 18 years old. The Boy Scouts of America outlined their goals for their soldiers in green and khaki:

The BSA sets their goals to develop American citizens who are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit; have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness; have personal values based on religious concepts; have the desire and skills to help others; understand the principles of the American social, economic, and governmental systems; are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand our nation's role in the world; have a keen respect for the basic rights of all people; and are prepared to participate in and give leadership to American society (BSA).

On paper, this organization is well thought out and is evident that they have a plan for the youth in their organization. Their positions seem to be driven by the American heritage and they want to take a role in our nation's future.

According to figures released by the Boy Scouts of America, membership as of December 31, 2004 stands as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> “The highest rank in Cub Scouting and the only Cub Scout badge that may be worn on the Boy Scout uniform. A boy who has earned the Arrow of Light Award is eligible to become a Boy Scout” (BSA).

**988,995** Boy Scouts/Varsity Scouts

**543,487** adult volunteers

**52,131** troops/teams

With close to one and a half million members in the organization, which is not including Cub Scouts<sup>4</sup>, it costs a lot of money to keep that many in khaki and green going. The Boy Scouts of America stated that their funds are derived from several sources. One source is the individual scout and his parents, the troop, the chartered organization, and the community. BSA says that:

“Boys are encouraged to earn money whenever possible to pay their own expenses, and they also contribute dues to their troop treasuries to pay for budgeted items. Troops obtain additional income by working on approved money-earning projects. The community, including parents, supports Scouting through the United Way, Friends of Scouting campaigns, bequests, and special contributions to the BSA local council. This income provides leadership training, outdoor programs, council service centers and other facilities, and professional service for units” (BSA).

When looking at how money is raised for the organization, it seems that things are set in a positive way to help the boys grow and this is their sole source of income. However, it will be discussed later how this is not necessarily the case for the National Jamboree that the Boy Scouts hold every four years.



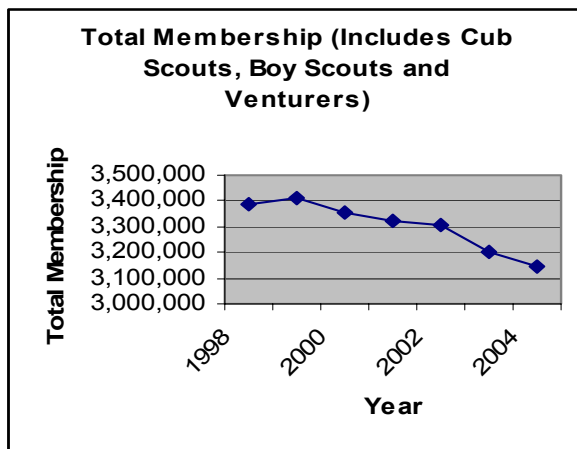
Editorial cartoon in the Phoenix

When examining the Boy Scouts of America’s positions on certain issues such as diversity, grey areas begin to form and politics seem to dictate how they word their

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<sup>4</sup> Tiger Cubs – 265,028 (Up 0.6% from 2003); Cub Scouts – 885,341 (Down 1.4%); Webelos – 725,383 (Down 3.6%); Total Cub Scouts – 1,875,752 (down 2%)

statements. When addressing their position on diversity, they covertly bring up the Supreme Court case *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, involving the dismissal of a gay Scout leader, by simply saying, “On June 28, 2000, the United States Supreme Court reaffirmed the Boy Scouts of America’s standing as a private organization with the right to set its own membership and leadership standards” (BSA). Covering their case quickly in the following paragraph with, “The BSA respects the rights of people and groups who hold values that differ from those encompassed in the Scout Oath and Law, and the BSA makes no effort to deny the rights of those whose views differ to hold their attitudes or opinions” (BSA). In that Supreme Court case, BSA released a statement to the news saying, “We believe an avowed homosexual is not a role model for the values espoused in the Scout Oath and Law” (BSA). It is clear that the Boy Scouts of America do not want homosexuals in their organization and their views have been tested before at a national level. In a society that tends to be more accepting every year, it’s interesting



Source: Scouting For All

that the Boy Scouts of America has kept their bias stance against homosexuals. A poll done by Newsweek in May 2005 found out some interesting information about voters in Massachusetts. It must be noted, however, that in May 2004, Massachusetts began performing the marriages of same-sex couples. In that year, 6,142 same-sex marriages were performed. In contrast, 30,872 heterosexual marriages were performed that year. The public support in May 2004 of same-sex marriages was 34 percent but in April 2005, the support increased to 56 percent in Massachusetts. Actually, 84 percent of voters in Massachusetts said that gay marriage has had a positive or no impact on the quality of life (Newsweek 12). This poll clearly shows that society’s trend is that as time progresses,

acceptance also grows; this is evident when in less than a year, public support for gay marriage rose a dramatic 22 percent.

It seems that the Boy Scouts' membership rates have been heading in a significantly opposite direction as compared to the public opinion in Massachusetts. Between 1998 and 2004, membership has dropped a total of 7.1 percent. Why is BSA membership declining? "Are parents, who may have had great Scouting experiences themselves as youth, become disenchanted with the BSA's policies of excluding anyone, particularly homosexuals in this increasingly accepting society?" (Rice 1-3) Questions like these need to be asked to find the true meaning behind the dropping numbers of membership in the Boy Scouts of America.

### **III. BSA vs. Gays**

On June 28, 2000, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America can bar homosexuals from being troop leaders. The 5-4 vote was enough to overturn a New Jersey Supreme Court ruling that the dismissal of James Dale, a gay Scout leader, had been illegal under the state's anti-discrimination law. He wanted to become an adult leader and was admitted to the Order of the Arrow, Boy Scouts' Honor Society. He also earned the rank of Eagle Scout, Scouting's highest honor and one that only three percent of all Scouts receive. The Boy Scouts countered by saying that it has the right to decide who can join its organization, which also excludes atheists and agnostics. They also said that forcing them to accept gays would violate its constitutional right of freedom of association and free speech under the First Amendment (CNN).

Then Chief Justice William Rehnquist said for the court majority that applying a state public accommodations law to require the Boy Scouts to admit a gay troop leader violates the group's constitutional right to expressive association. Counter to this, he did add that, "We are not, as we must not be guided by our views of whether the Boy Scouts' teaching with respect to homosexual conduct are right or wrong." (CNN) It seems to be that Chief Justice William Rehnquist was not completely thrilled with the outcome on a personal level and a sense of acceptance was hinted towards the Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scouts have stated in writing to James Dale that homosexuality was contrary to the organization's values. Scouting's Oath also requires members to be "morally straight." "The organization 'takes the position that homosexual conduct is inconsistent with the Scout oath... and contrary to the Scout Law to be 'clean' in word and deed,' according to Thomas E. Baker, a constitutional scholar at the Drake University Law School who wrote an impartial analysis of the case for the American Bar Association" (CNN). The Boy Scouts found out that Dale was gay after a newspaper article revealed the fact. Dale, as co-president of Rutgers University's Lesbian/Gay

Alliance, gave a speech in July 1990, which the organization was the topic of the speech, and later that month, he received a dismissal letter from the Boy Scouts.

“The Boy Scouts have been sued many times before in state courts, but the organization has consistently won cases that say it does not fall under state public accommodations laws. State courts have also ruled in the Boy Scouts’ favor in similar public-accommodation cases in California, Connecticut, Oregon and Kansas. These similar cases were brought by girls, atheists, homosexuals and the like” (CNN).

**Scout Oath (or Promise)**  
On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.

The Boy Scouts argued that their First Amendment free speech and freedom of association rights would be violated by the court if they were ordered to allow homosexuals. BSA believed that it was up to them, not the courts, to decide who can join their organization and who can’t.

With court orders evident, it does seem that the Boy Scouts are not budging on their stance and seem to hold strong in court. These court cases just show that their prejudice can be upheld in court and it is going to take change in their organization to fix the way they hold their admittance in the Boy Scouts of America.

“For 12 years they said, ‘You’re perfect, just what we want, get involved, it’s family.’ Then they found one small thing about who you are and kicked me out.”  
*-James Dale said before the case was argued*

#### **IV. Backing of Organizations**

Like the members in the Boy Scouts, some of the backing organizations are sticking with BSA while others are taking steps to distance themselves. First, the religious organizations that have been tied with the Boy Scouts are taking both sides with the issue. Those supporting the straights-only rule are the Mormon and Roman Catholic churches. Together, they sponsor about 750,000 Scouts (France 45). It’s important to note that even though the BSA is not affiliated with one religion, troop meetings and



events are held at churches and synagogues and are sponsored by them to be held at their buildings. Taking the opposing side and going against the straight-only rule is led by the United Church of Christ followed by Baptist and Episcopal congregations. They took a step by asking the Scouts that meet in their buildings to reconsider the organization that they are a part of. Taking this step farther, one can look towards the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. They “went even further, issuing a remarkable public denunciation and calling upon synagogues to end Scout sponsorship and congregants to pull their children out of the dens, packs or troops. Hundreds of parents have complied” (France 45). However, for every negative outlook, there is at the same time a positive one. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has taken the moment and made the Boy Scouts of America their official youth program for the church.

Companies are also making a move to support the Boy Scouts like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Companies that continue to support the Boy Scouts, according to *Newsweek*, include Merrill Lynch, Textron and Procter and Gamble. But yet again, there is another side to the issue and companies like Levi Strauss, Wells Fargo, Fleet Bank, CVS, Philadelphia Foundation and Communications Workers of America have made it apparent that they would like to not be as involved with the Boy Scouts as much as they had been previously (45).

The popular organization United Way has supported the Boy Scouts for many years, but in 2001, forty-four of the wealthiest chapters in the United Way “blocked additional support or changed allocations in order to comply with their own nondiscrimination policies; a few others have augmented funding, in keeping with their community standards” (France 45). Another popular figure aside from the United Way that was associated with the Boy Scouts was director Steven Spielberg. Spielberg was once an Eagle Scout and also on the advisory board, but ended his 10 years on the board because he said that he could not support and serve on a group that practices “intolerance and discrimination” (France 44). It is with the United Way and individuals like Steven Spielberg that show that the Boy Scouts may need to change their views to hold the supporters that they may be losing.

## **V. BSA Within**

According to a poll conducted by the Boy Scouts of America of its own organization and its members within, only 30 percent of Scout parents don’t support the current policy on homosexuality (BSA). However, one group that is rarely polled are the Scout’s themselves and how they feel about the decision. In an article that stirred many emotions from the BSA and the organizations against them titled “Scouts Divided” by David France in *Newsweek*. He interviewed several Scouts at the 15<sup>th</sup> National Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill about the controversial decision by the organization. Jeff Moran from

Troop 1320 said, “In the Bible, it’s a sin to be gay,” and when asked to clarify if that meant to keep homosexuals out of Scouting, he responded with, “Exactly.” (France 44) Some Scouts are torn with the idea of gays being in the Boy Scouts. Greg Gutta Jr., only 15 years old, said, “They say everybody should have the right to be in the Scouts, but everybody has the right to feel comfortable, too. A lot of people don’t feel comfortable around homosexuals” (France 44). It’s astounding that fifteen year olds have to deal with these issues. Debates are arising all over scouting events such as in June 2005 at the National Youth Leadership Training Course in Hebron Kentucky, a discussion was brought up among staff members. Tim Wright, a 19 year old adult leader at the camp, said, “I have been involved in Scouts for so many years and I think it is one of the best things I have ever done. I don’t think this program should be limited to certain people just because of something that they can’t change, like being gay.” Many other Scouts nodded their heads in agreement. Of course this only reflects one Scouts opinion and it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Scouts in general. However, this is just showing that the problem is far reaching and is affecting many people. If the Boy Scouts were to allow homosexuals to participate in the BSA, it would affect everyone affiliated with the organization. It must be thought that it would affect the Greg Gutta’s out there that would have to venture out in the woods in a backpacking trip with a fellow Scout that is homosexual. While that would not bother some people, it could affect the boys camping and the parents sending their children off into the wilderness in the care of someone else.

However, Dan Kennedy writes a compelling argument and basis for the question regarding leaders that are homosexuals in his article titled “Where the Boys Are” for the *Boston Phoenix*. He argues that there is the anti-gay fear that homosexuals target boys for inappropriate reasons. Kennedy argues that an out gay man is very unlikely to be a pedophile. “Invariably, sexual predators turn out to be heterosexuals, or men who pose as heterosexuals, such as Christopher Reardon, a married man who recently pleaded guilty to sexually abusing boys at a church where he worked, a YMCA, and yes, a Boy Scout camp” (Kennedy 3). This is just one example of why there are contradictions to every argument. Does this reassure parents of allowing their children to venture into the woods led by another adult leader? Not exactly. However, it should show that it does not necessarily take a homosexual to be a pedophile. Just because an open homosexual would like to be an adult leader, like James Dale, this does not make him a pedophile.

## **VI. National Jamboree**

One of the Boy Scouts’ major events is the National Jamboree, which is held every four years and recently has been held at Fort A.P. Hill near Fredericksburg, VA. This expensive campout is a weeklong event which features courses for hundreds of

merit badges, boating, archery, and also includes up-close and personal views of military equipment like tanks and trucks. Also, usually the current President of the United States makes an appearance at the Jamboree and makes a speech such as President Bush in 2004 did to thousands of Scouts. The Jamboree is staffed by the hundreds of Boy Scout volunteers and adult leaders. Along side of those volunteer and adult leaders are also military personnel helping operate and run the military equipment.

How is this large camp paid for? Partly by the Boy Scouts and partly by the U.S. government using the taxpayers' money. At first, there may seem to be nothing wrong with this. But upon closer inspection the government bearing some of the financial burden is wrong because the government is paying for a private organization's extravaganza, one that every year costs more and more. In 2000, government looked into the legality of this occurrence that cost taxpayers that year \$5 million. Then Attorney General Janet Reno declared that the jamboree was not specifically federally directed training, but a private event for which the government provides logistical support. Under this "logistical support" the government offers makes this perfectly allowable, therefore, even for an organization that discriminates (France 49). There clearly had to be a loophole that would be fixed by the next year's jamboree that would not allow the taxpayers to have to pay for this event. However, four years later at the next Jamboree, the government spent over \$7 million of taxpayers' money (CNN). But since the taxpayers are helping pay for this National Jamboree, they surely do not have to be a part of the Boy Scouts of America to participate in the events, right? However, this is not the case.

"Federal employees are indeed teaching skills and lessons. In fact, the Department of Interior is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to stock a trout pond and sent several hundred staffers to teach courses the Scouts must pass in order to receive selected merit badges, including fly fishing. Department officials defend their presence, saying anybody driving past the jamboree is welcome to attend, even gay kids and adults. But at A.P. Hill, Ben Jelsema, chairman of the fishing program for the jamboree, was turning away non-Scouts, saying those areas 'are not open to the public'" (France 49).

Clearly such an issue needs to be resolved. The Boy Scouts of America should be in a different category from gay, lesbian and AIDS organizations and the like as well when looking at this issue. The case is clear because the Boy Scouts are a private organization and discriminate unlike other organizations that are public. It is completely unethical for the Boy Scouts, who hold their values and honors high, to be accepting \$7 million of taxpayers' money from the United States government due to the fact that they are not open to the general public and are a private organization that discriminates against gays.

## **VII. Looking Ahead**

This “hetero-only” policy of the Boy Scouts of America is not the same for all Scouting organizations spanning the world. For instance, Canada and their Scouting program. In July 2000, the first official gay and lesbian scout troop marched in Toronto’s annual Gay Pride Parade. According to Scouts Canada, which is the Boy Scouts of America’s equivalent, and to scouts themselves, which there is about 150,000, there have been very few complaints about the new troop. The members of the organization said that they received more complaints when they allowed women just two years ago (Brooke).

An argument could be made that for the Boy Scouts of America to take a step to allow homosexuals admittance, it would be nearly impossible, seeing as the BSA is almost ten times the size of Scouts Canada. Also, Canada as a whole tends to pass more accepting legislation towards homosexuals. Is it out of the question? Not at all. It’s a step that must be looked at down the road and possibly a tool or guide toward making the Boy Scouts of America a more accepting and tolerant private organization. The Boy Scouts of America should be an organization that all youth organizations look toward for guidance and the BSA is hardly that at its current state.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

The Boy Scouts of America, from first glance, may seem like the pinnacle of youth programs here in the United States of America. However, the BSA is far from this. With a country that prides diversity and acceptance, the Boy Scouts of America is hardly the poster organization for this country. It is clear that the Boy Scouts of America is not an ethical organization for receiving millions of taxpayers’ dollars from the government to fund their private organization that discriminates against homosexuals. The BSA’s span of 95 years does not exempt them from standing up to the values that they hold so high in society through the Scout Oath and Law. Their sidestepping lingo for their organization does not replace the fact that they are using taxpayer dollars to fund for their own private Jamboree. The Boy Scouts of America need to find an alternative to be a more accepting organization, like Scouts Canada, has or they could lose the support of people like Steven Spielberg and companies like Fleet Bank and Levi Strauss. They also risk losing the support of their most critical ally: the American people.

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