

December 12, 2012

Dr. Jay McRoy, Chair
English Department
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
900 Wood Road
Kenosha, WI 53141-2000

Dear Dr. McRoy,

For your review, I have enclosed documents that prove my eligibility for graduation from the English Department at the University of Wisconsin Parkside. I am confident that you will find these useful in analyzing my fulfillment of the departmental objectives and moreover, my readiness to enter writing related career.

Enclosed you will find documents that manifest my success in meeting and surpassing the five departmental goals. These goals, concerning writing, critical reading and analysis, history and theory, research, and collaborative learning, are all displayed in the subsequent documents. You will not only find that each document exemplifies mastery of one particular department objective, but that my writing encapsulates a conglomerate of these skills in each piece.

In analyzing my writing, you will notice my mastery of grammatical devices and rhetorical strategy in my piece "Deconstructing the Shakespearean Bromance," where I seamlessly incorporate my close reading of the text with homoerotic, theoretical framework.

Concerning the critical analysis goal, you will find that my Seminar in Literature paper entitled "The Ten-Fold of Meg Murray's Ontological Journey" successfully uses complex philosophy to deconstruct meanings within children's literature. Moreover, this piece documents my ability to apply critical analysis skills to a variety of texts, including Aristotle's *Categories* and Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*.

In terms of the history and theory goal, you will notice my paper "Arriving at Postcolonial Conclusions through Abridged Discourses in Cheng," which I composed

English Department
December 12, 2012
Page 2

for Professor Bruce Stone's Literary Analysis class. Literary Analysis is the gateway course and the cornerstone course for the major, and I believe my grasp of complex, Postcolonial criticisms lend themselves well in my ability to analyze characters through different lenses.

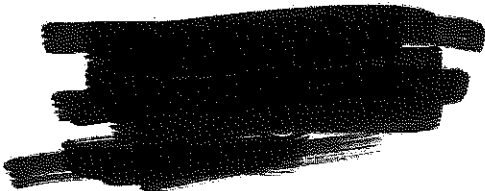
As for the research goal, my enclosed paper, "The Walking Dead: The Paradox of Simulacra in *White Noise*" required extensive research about hyperrealism and its implications in art and literature. Pulling from Jean Baudrillard and a variety of theoretical articles, I manifest my ability to incorporate research, theory and analytical skills to Don DeLillo's novel, *White Noise*.

In addition to theoretical research, I have included a news article entitled "Avon Township Community Foundation." This article shows my careful use of objectivity and research. I completed my writing internship with *The Lake County Journal*, where I wrote multiple articles per week over the course of the summer of 2012. My included article was one of my multiple cover story articles. As an extensive piece that the weekly paper centered itself around, I conducted multiple interviews, pulled from governmental statistics, and relied on a variety of sources.


Concerning collaborative learning, you will find my essay entitled, "The Edge," show my ability to consider myself, my interviewee, and my peers as this document is the third and final draft of a workshop piece completed for Professor Nick Tryling's Advanced Expository Writing Course. The metamorphosis of this piece shows my consideration of my audience and my peers in shaping my writing.

I am confident that these aforementioned essays will illustrate my growth within the department, and further, my ability to represent the department outside the University and as an alumnus of the UW-Parkside English Department. I would like to express my appreciation for your time and consideration in your analysis of the foregoing documents.

Sincerely,

A large, solid black rectangular redaction covers the signature area of the letter.


Enclosure



Reflective Essay

Initially, I came to UW-Parkside with the intentions of completing an English degree and a Teacher Education certificate, so I could fulfill one of my dreams of becoming a high school English teacher. English had always been my strongest subject, and I thoroughly enjoyed writing from an early age. I hoped to one day be published in *Rolling Stone Magazine*. English seemed like the only logical fit, and in conjunction with a Teacher Education certificate, I was sure I would be satisfied with my career. Throughout my senior year of high school, though, my parents and friends insisted “there isn’t any money in teaching,” and said that I should consider a more lucrative career. The heckling became so intense, that my 75 year old grandmother would clip articles about poor teacher salaries and job outlooks from the Chicago Tribune. She would seal them up in little envelopes and mail them to me on a weekly basis. Conveniently for the peanut gallery, otherwise known as my family, the Teacher Education Department closed its doors in the spring of 2010, as I was finishing up my freshman year. Despite this set back, I had become enamored with both UW-Parkside and its English department. I enjoyed writing for *The Ranger News*, and decided to stay and complete my English degree and focus my studies in writing and editing. Then, there arose the inevitable question—one which I have been plagued with by my family, friends and peers alike for the last three years: “So, what are you going to do with a degree in English?”


Popular belief has it that English majors can do one thing only: go to graduate school. Contrary to popular belief, I think English is one of the most useful and versatile degrees, and there are a plethora of fields that would welcome and benefit from the articulate, analytical nature of a UW-Parkside English graduate. Thus, I could not be happier with my decision. For, at the crux of this discipline, lie some of the most applicable texts, tools and skills that not only



force students to be more literate academically, but literate in an interpersonal, worldly sense as well. Understanding literature and multimedia texts, writing well and formulating an organized argument are vital skills for most industries today.


Throughout my time studying in the UW-Parkside English Department, I strongly feel as though my professors have equipped me with the aforementioned analytical, organizational and critical skills. I believe that I have not only completed the five departmental goals, but I have found myself subtly applying these objectives on a daily basis. These five—critical analysis, history and theory, writing, collaborative learning and research—have broadened and solidified my capabilities as a writer. The department objectives run in conjunction with my career goals as a journalist; thus, my progress, as displayed in the subsequent documents, will prove my preparedness in entering such a field.

Though I have chosen to focus my English degree in writing, my literature classes have been as influential as my writing intensive courses. The age old argument, used as early as first grade, protests, “But, I’m never going to use this.” This statement holds a certain degree of truth; as a hopeful writer, I may not need to analyze the religious implications in early Romantic poetry, nor will Antonio’s true feelings—homoerotic or platonic—for Bassanio in Shakespeare’s comedy *The Merchant of Venice* be pivotal in writing news articles. However, courses in literature have forced me to analyze a text’s contextual, social, political, religious and moral implications. In doing this, I have improved my analytical skills and my critical thinking ability. Moreover, in analyzing literature and studying its important elements, I have learned how to deconstruct the layers of meaning that shape our existence. Literature is the derivative of actuality; it is shaped to mirror, counter, challenge and warp practices and systems that already exist. Even Children’s Literature and its fantastic elements teach us something about the society



in which the book was conceived. The enjoyment and adventure we experience as readers comes from the author's craft and our own willingness to allow them to captivate us; it is the content and its interpretations where the true value lies. In a contrived, increasing artificial world, I have found myself constantly looking back to Dean Karpowicz's American Literature class, where we studied Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and its subtle implications that Baudrillard's idea of hyperrealities are close to becoming our entire reality. Published in 1985, these ideas were ahead of their time, and indicative of generations to come. As books like DeLillo's are the products of their environments, they wind up being eloquently constructed depictions of the world. By acknowledging the depth and complexities that lie beneath the surface of a novel, we truly get a multifaceted view of society.


A vital part of understanding literature comes from understanding its criticisms. After studying literary history, theory and criticism with Professor Bruce Stone, I have put Nietzsche, Derrida, Freud and Gilbert's theories into practice, and have found myself referring back to them when making sense out of materials in my Communications and Ethnic Studies courses. Postcolonial theory has significantly come into play in my Ethnic Studies courses. In Ethnic Studies courses, we have closely examined the annexation of Hawaii and the way power, language and political influence can strip natives of their land, spread disease, and manipulate language and understanding to forge one nation's consent in joining another. In these courses, I have also studied the way Native Americans and other minority groups are now using film, literature and the internet to redeem their people and give themselves a first voice. In my Communication theory courses, I find myself thinking back to Ferdinand de Saussure when studying semiotics and the social construction of language and symbols. Had I not taken English 266, I may not have been introduced to critical theories, like Postcolonialism, Formalism and



Semantics, that proved to be pertinent and relevant in other areas of historical discourse. Prior to my application of Postcolonialism in my Ethnic Studies courses, I demonstrated my grasp of Irish and British colonialism in my essay, "Arriving at Postcolonial Conclusions through Abridged Discourses in Cheng". In this essay, I thoroughly examine James Joyce's novella, *The Dead*, using a postcolonial lens. After this assignment, I learned that imperialism allows both dominant and submissive cultures to assert themselves in subtle ways, and these relationships can be taken at surface value. By understanding texts, their analyses and criticisms, we, in turn, understand human behavior, policies and the world in a much more intricate way. In this way, the department has equipped me with critical and analytical skills that help me look beyond text and make sense of the world around me.

In gaining a clearer understanding of institutions past and present, one naturally becomes self aware and organized in thought. Organization is vital when constructing papers, arguments and verbal dialect in the business world. I am confident that the English department has instilled vital organizational and grammatical tools in me, and further, made me a versatile writer. Tara Pederson's Shakespeare course, or English 320, forced me to become versatile in seventeenth century rhetoric, and her papers allowed me to merge these contexts and dialects with those of the present. In my paper, "Deconstructing the Shakespearian Bromance," I implore organizational and rhetorical wit to make sense out of *The Merchant of Venice* and the duality of Antonio and Bassanio's relationship, demonstrating organization in thought and craft.

Courses like Nick Tryling's Advanced Expository Writing helped me develop expository, narrative and descriptive skills in my writing. It forced me out of my comfort zone, and pushed me to write creatively for an audience. Her workshops taught me that there is more to feedback and improvement than grammatical errors; rather, there are unlimited word choices,



organizational techniques and literary devices that can deliver a story with more direct force, continuity and authenticity than I had previously known. The feedback from this class forced me to consider my audience when writing; this is evident in my personal pieces like "The Edge," which tell the true story of my best friend and my relationship with him. Having considered new structural and rhetoric skills with my writing, and having received collaborative feedback from my classmates on this draft, I was able to conclusively come to a final draft that satisfied both my reader and myself.

In my time interning with the Lake County Journal, I learned AP format, objectivity and structure. This, like Advanced Expository Writing, forced me to write for my audience; that is, I have come to ask myself what it is that the reader wants to know, and then tackle those questions with eloquence, organization and professionalism. Ranging from 500 word *Lake County Journal* articles to 15 page theoretical essays, I have learned how to establish an argument or topic, and then further maintain authority on the subject throughout the piece.

I am confident that UW-Parkside's English Department has prepared me for a career in news writing and reporting. I know that the skills I now possess will allow me to enter many fields with the confidence and articulacy to move both myself and my company forward. I hope that the following documents in this portfolio will showcase my growth and further, that my success in fulfilling the five department objectives. In doing so, I hope to graduate in the spring of 2013 and apply these five skills in my journalistic career.


Introduction to "Bros before Hoes: Deconstructing the Shakespearean Bromance"

The following piece is entitled "Bros before Hoes: Deconstructing the Shakespearean Bromance." I wrote this piece in the fall of 2011 for ENGL 320 Shakespeare with Dr. Tara Pedersen. This was our final paper assignment for the semester, and thus, we were given the freedom to write about any one or two of the plays we had read throughout the semester. After realizing I was partial to Shakespeare's comedies, I chose to write about one of my favorites we had studied, *The Merchant of Venice*. I was fascinated by its complex characters and relationships; therefore, I decided to focus on the duality of Bassanio and Antonio's relationship, as the text provides undeniable, underlying homoerotic undertones and using both historical evidence and textual implications to bolster my reading. Thus, this piece showcases my exceptional completion of both the critical analysis and writing goals.

In terms of critical analysis, this piece provides a close, interpretive reading of text that intimidated me at the beginning of the semester. One of my biggest challenges in this course was my initial attitude towards Shakespeare. I had only read a couple of his plays in high school, and the thought of spending an entire semester analyzing his works intimidated me beyond reason. However, I quickly adjusted to the rhetoric of the time, and the more I read and participated in class, I felt my grasp over the plot and characters becoming firmer. Once I was confident enough in my ability to understand the text on a surface level, I began feeling more and more confident digging for layers of meaning and applying critical theory. I began to understand the interplay between Shakespeare's works and his contemporary social laws, like coverture, that the works mirrored and sometimes satirized. In this paper, I show distinctive evidence in my ability to understand the text's homoerotic elements and the way laws of coverture and familial structures influenced friendships. My close analysis is best exemplified through my ability to

connect social laws of the time with the subtle implications of Antonio's homoerotic, unrequited love for Bassanio. Further, my argument that society fosters these relationships shows a holistic consideration and interplay of literary devices and historical contexts in a unique reader response to the text.

In terms of the writing goal, "Bros before Hoes: Deconstructing the Shakespearean Bromance," shows my impeccable organizational skills in my essay structure. It showcases my ability to use a text, which once intimidated me, effectively in an argument. My ability to interpret and articulate how the underlying connections of mothers, coverture, the private and public spectrums favor same sexed friendships suggests my capabilities in structuring a unique perspective. Ultimately, I am able to defend this unique perspective as I maintain control of my subject through rhetoric and organization that runs consistent through the essay. My ability to argue a unique perspective that remains theoretical and persuasive show my skills in academic essay writing, as my thesis, body and concluding paragraphs hold a well organized argument throughout.


Professor Pedersen

ENG 320

10 December, 2011

"Bros before Hoes: Deconstructing the Shakespearean Bromance"

While many have tried to deduce gender roles in Shakespearean works, there is considerable evidence about the Elizabethan Era's societal implications on gender relationships between Shakespearean characters. From comedies to dramas, Shakespeare constructs similar familial and societal circumstances that produce evident strengths in same sex relationships, specifically in his treatment of coverture, wherein women serve as extensions of their fathers and husbands in public life. In the private home life, there were fewer mothers than fathers during the era, due to the complications associated with childbirth. Therefore, it cannot be dismissed that Shakespeare's plays present patriarchal societies that mirror the Elizabethan era. With inequities between genders and an absence of mature females in society, it is difficult for Shakespearean characters to relate to the opposite sex and further, transcend these differences within marital bonds. Thus, one can infer that Elizabethan society fosters same sex relationships; males can only see other men as true equals under coverture, and women seek feminine bonds that familial structures cannot provide. In his essay "The Bankruptcy of Homoerotic Amity in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*," Steve Patterson comments on the nature of same sex friendships, explaining that amity "represented friendship as an identity premised upon the value of same-sex love which codified passionate behaviors between men. Its tropes, while now

perhaps somewhat strange or ambiguous, were at the time of the play's production topical enough for both depiction and revision in popular formats." (Patterson 10).

In Shakespeare's comedy, *The Merchant of Venice*, characters Antonio and Bassanio are the manifestation of the aforementioned same sex friendship, as the play centers itself around the two's relationship. In the exposition, Antonio offers his body as debt to fulfill the economic needs of Bassanio. Antonio's hope for a mutual loyalty and love comes to fruition in the dénouement, where Bassanio, in turn, offers his ring—emblematic of his relationship with Portia—to repay the judge who spared his friend. Similarly, in terms of female bonds, one can trace the relationship of Portia and Nerissa in "*The Merchant of Venice*," as women are often othered in society, and find strength and integrity in their alienation. Thus, under the constraints of coverture and the lack of motherly figures, it can be deduced that same-sex bonds in Shakespearian works are often rendered more powerful and substantial than hetero, martial relationships. Though sometimes deemed homoerotic, these relationships seem to assert that same sex bonds are considerably more powerful interpersonally, as well as economically, as they prove to be beneficial on a greater, sociological level. Laws of kinship and coverture perpetuate these relationships in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Though their relationship is often subject to homoerotic questioning, Antonio and Bassanio formulate the central relationship in *The Merchant of Venice*, as their relationship perpetuates the momentum for much of the conflict. In the first act of the play, Bassanio seeks out his melancholy merchant friend, Antonio, for a loan so he can court Portia. Under coverture, Portia's father had set up a lottery that will choose his daughter's husband. Where Portia seems to have no choice in her future, Bassanio not only has the freedom to court who he pleases, but to make fiscal deals with other men. Additionally, Portia's wealth seems to be what entices

Bassanio, rendering her as an object of domesticity and prospect. Though Antonio seems to have his doubts of Bassanio's return, he expresses his loyalty and servitude to his companion. In order to fund his friend's request seeks out the cynical and wealthy Shylock. Shylock demands that if Antonio does not repay his debts, he must give a pound of his flesh. Immediately, the audience sees the lengths which Antonio will go to in order to appease his male companion. Thus, Antonio assumes the role of the hopelessly devoted friend, as Patterson explains "Friendship themes were so often the subject of poetry and prose during the last decade of the sixteenth century that it would not have taken an audience long to recognize Antonio as the prototype of the passionate friend." (Patterson 10). When Bassanio is unable to repay his debts to Antonio, and thereafter, Shylock, Antonio must suffer the consequences. Shylock demands the pound of flesh, and the men appear in court. Antonio seems to play the martyr, as he does not fight to live; rather, he gives a long winded speech, in which he seems to seek Bassanio's pity and admiration. He begs, "Commend me to your honorable wife, tell her the process of Antonio's end, say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death; and when the tale is told, bid her be judge whether Bassanio had not once a love." (4.1.273). To this, Bassanio replies by assuring his friend that his love for Antonio is unrequited and more important than his wife. He proclaims, "Antonio, I am married to a wife which is dear to me as life itself, but life itself, my wife and the world are not with me esteem'd above thy life. I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all here to this devil to deliver you." (4.1.282). This exchange subverts the entirety of the bet's heterosexual intentions, as Antonio's wish is granted; Bassanio not only admits his love for Antonio, but admits to valuing Antonio more than his life and his wife. When the judge—who is, in fact, Portia in disguise—grants Antonio his pardon from the bet, Antonio reprimands Shylock, forcing him to convert to Christianity and dividing his estate. The judge, as a token of appreciation,

Introduction to “Arriving at Postcolonial Conclusions through Abridged Discourses in Cheng”

The following essay is entitled “Arriving at Postcolonial Conclusions through Abridged Discourses in Cheng.” I wrote this piece in the fall of 2010 for ENGL 266 Literary Analysis with Professor Bruce Stone. The following essay was the last of our assigned essays, and thus, we were given more freedom in structuring our theoretical framework. We were to choose any of the texts we had read for the semester, and we were to provide a postcolonial reading of the text. We were instructed to use at least one theorist’s framework to help structure our postcolonial analysis. I chose to give a close reading of James Joyce’s story “The Dead,” primarily pulling criticism from Vincent Chang’s “Empire and Patriarchy in ‘The Dead.’” Throughout the semester, we had studied Joyce, and I had noticed an undeniable tension between British and Irish culture seething in the undertones of his texts; thus, I felt the conflict and Cheng’s analysis would provide for a wholesome Postcolonial reading.

In terms of the history and theory goal, the following essay meets and exceeds these goals for its ability to both understand and argue for deeper critical theory. That is, while I found Chang’s argument for Gabriel’s embodiment of both masculinity and conquistador compelling, I could not help but notice the subtleties within the text that progressively suggested a manipulation in the dichotomy of power. That is, I noticed many of the female characters, who Chang argues manifest the conquered Irish, seem to assert their power subtly, and in the climactic ending scene with Greta, there seems to be an equilibrium. I focused my essay around this idea, showing strong evidence of grasping Cheng’s argument, while applying it to my own Postcolonial reading. Further, my understanding of Postcolonial tension and the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed delves a level deeper in my ability to find the holes and

overlooked areas in a published critical analysis. As illustrated in the following paper, I can not only distinguish between levels in implicit imperialistic dichotomies, but I am able to recognize the assertion of power in each. Moreover, in my ability to contextualize and read the actions of Lilly, Mrs. Ivors and Greta and their sobering effects on Gabriel, I developed an understanding of identity, limitations and assertions of power between the conflicting groups.

While Literary Analysis intimidated me as both my first English course and my gateway into theory, I often doubted my understanding of complex theories and assigned readings. I overcame this goal, especially at the end of the semester, as I realized I was noticing intersections in theory, and I was able to point out areas where I disagreed with the author. I realized in the duality of men and women, as well as colonizer and colonized, that I was merging gender and postcolonial theory. Moreover, I realized that my close Postcolonial reading left me feeling more satisfied with characters like Greta and Mrs. Ivors, and thus, I realized that despite my previous doubts, I had mastered complex theory and its application.

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Literary Analysis

22 December, 2010

Arriving at Postcolonial Conclusions through Abridged Discourses in Cheng

James Joyce's *Dubliners* has been widely revered as not only a fascinating collection of short stories, but a satisfactory postcolonial depiction of Dublin. Critics, like Vincent Cheng, have rightfully taken a particular interest in the final novella in Joyce's collection entitled "The Dead." Due to Joyce's narrative structure, critics, like Cheng, have focused their analyses too heavily on the controversial protagonist, Gabriel Conroy. As a result, Cheng's essay "Empire and Patriarchy in 'The Dead'" overlooks the paralysis of the *Dubliners*; and how the characters, particularly female, seem to obliterate the barrier between the colonizer and colonized throughout the story. While Cheng's reading of "The Dead" acknowledges Gabriel Conroy as an oddly sympathetic personification of British empiricism and male chauvinism, his essay omits the vitality of major characters and incidents that render alternate conclusions to postcolonial studies of "The Dead." These omissions support the nature of Cheng's empirical and patriarchal claims, yet they question how poignant these conditions are, as an alternate reading may imply an Irish liberation from the British oppression, and ultimately, from the paralysis that the characters have faced. Although "Empire and Patriarchy in The Dead" allows for a brief moment of equilibrium between the colonizers and colonized in its conclusion, Cheng fails to acknowledge the foreshadowing tone leading up to the symbolic, equalizing snowfall that concludes *Dubliners*.

In the exposition, Cheng appropriately addresses the introduction of Gabriel and his dialogue, which can easily be read as chauvinistic. As Gabriel's aunts have been eagerly awaiting his arrival, he excuses his tardiness by remarking that it "takes three mortal years" (Joyce 177) for his wife to dress herself, to which Cheng remarks is "an essentializing of the female in a form of infantilization, similar to the affectionate attitude of the British Empire towards its colonies as incorrigible children who can thus only be properly ruled by the parent empire" (Cheng 349). Thus, Gabriel not only manifests a domineering figure in a patriarchal sense, but in a symbolic sense too; he is representative of Brittan, and Greta is the personification of the Irish colonies. This reading seems to be plausible among postcolonialists, and Cheng illustrates it well.

Cheng also calls attention to Gabriel's entrance, as he goes on to tell his aunt, "here I am, right as mail," (Cheng 350) which Cheng argues is a play on words. Not only is Joyce's use of the word mail interchangeable with the word male, but the statement has a British origin, referring to the Royal Mail. Cheng then offers more evidence to support the patriarchal attitude of Conroy by giving examples of how he orders his children and his wife. It becomes particularly obvious that Gabriel dominates the household and his wife in an imperialistic manner, as he uses phrases like "if she were let" (Joyce 155) in his dialogue. While the evidence is convincing and certainly representative of the fatherly nature that Brittan ruled its colonies with, Cheng's argument focuses too much on Gabriel's dialogue, and not enough on what others say, or how they react. These reactions can significantly alter the meaning of the reading; Aunt Kate "nearly doubled herself" after hearing Greta comment on the actions of her husband. While the text seems to welcome Cheng's assertion of male—and British—dominance in the story, the women treat Gabriel as a "standing joke," which dilutes some of the power that

Cheng insists Gabriel prevails with over the women. This is clearly exemplified in the story's next significant encounter.

Following the demeaning introduction, Cheng notes yet another important incident—Gabriel and Lily's encounter—but unfortunately, he misconstrues Gabriel's dialogue and undermines Lily's. In fact, Cheng's essay subverts the importance of the female characters, and focuses too largely on their submission in comparison to Gabriel. Cheng reads the scene as a failed attempt at conversation between Gabriel and Lily due to Gabriel's condescending tone; however, the context suggests otherwise. While Cheng reads this section as Gabriel's inability to recognize Lily as a young adult with a voice of her own, the incident begs for a postcolonialist interpretation of class; furthermore, the conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed. In addition to their physical differences, Lily is owned by Gabriel's aunts, who are economically below Gabriel, thus distancing these characters even more. When Gabriel asks Lily questions about her courtship and education, Cheng believes that Lily renders "this moment awkward by challenging Gabriel's masculinity and his mastery, refusing to act as the child he expects of her" (Cheng 352). Cheng then asserts that Lily's refusal of the coin to smooth over their awkward incident was an act out of pure mastery—both economic and masculine. While Cheng's interpretation of the conversation leaves the postcolonial element unsatisfied, his explanation of the coin reasserts a theme of postcolonialism; Brittan, condescending in nature, has little to no understanding of its oppressed colony of Ireland, thus seeing it as a mere child incapable of having its own tongue. When the oppressed surprises the oppressor with rebellion, even though it is merely verbal, the oppressor is left feeling "discomposed by the girl's sudden retort" (Joyce 155). Although adequate in the end of its description of the incident, Cheng's essay immediately

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Professor Karpowicz

ENG 237

07 December, 2011

The Walking Dead: The Paradox of Simulacra in *White Noise*

“Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it” (Baudrillard, par.2). In his essay “Simulacra and Simulations”, Jean Baudrillard explains the nature of the “hyperreal;” that is, he explains the way realities and truths are malleable, as they are often reconstructed by popular public perceptions. He argues that socially constructed abstract meanings overpower inherent objectives. Another writer and avant-gardist in hyperrealities, Eugene L. Arva, applies Baudrillard’s theory to literature in his essay, “Writing the Vanishing Real: Hyperreality and Magical Realism.” In his essay, Arva acknowledges, expands upon and further applies Baudrillard’s premises to literature. Arva distinguishes between reality and the contrived in the narrative structure, stating that “Baudrillard points to a quite different society, in which the medium and the message have become indistinguishable from each other because, in the absence of an original referent, the medium has gradually turned into its own referent. Once everything has succumbed to the all-encompassing process of simulation, there is no longer anything to be represented” (Arva 64).

Similarly, Don DeLillo’s postmodern novel *White Noise* describes the way in which artificiality dilutes mankind’s experience, as the Gladney family manifests obsessions with death

to the point where their perceptions are so diluted that they cannot anticipate their actual, impending death. DeLillo's *White Noise* does not portray the extent of society's existence through the contrived; rather, the text asserts that hyperrealities have managed to surpass even the most binary stages of existence. Furthermore, emulating Baudrillard, DeLillo's *White Noise* functions through its culturally recognized archetypes—which themselves serve as an irony—to assert that there is nothing real about reality, nothing lethal about the dead, and nothing vibrant about existence. Ultimately, DeLillo creates a paradoxical, demi-existential novel that remains relevant and timeless in its effort to undermine the synthetic nature of ideas, and how these contrived ideas have more meaning than life and death themselves.

In DeLillo's *White Noise*, the audience receives numerous levels of simulacra through various reconstructed elements of setting and plot. The frequently visited places in the novel themselves serve a slightly familiar yet wildly obscure purpose. Supermarkets, traditionally used for convenience and consumerism, become safe havens during the airborne toxic event. Churches, once used for dogmatic religious practice, become the epicenter for social graces and mannerisms. The audience even gets a sense of inherent, biological foundations being replaced with technology through the word "lens," as Heinrich remarks, "How many people even know they have a lens? They think 'lens' must mean 'camera'" (DeLillo 158). A term once describing a very fundamental part of the occipital structure has come to mean something completely contrived from technology. Heinrich describes the way that the term is no longer even recognizable, as the occipital structure itself is rendered unknown due to this shift in language.

After extracting the aforementioned, smaller instances of hyperreality, the reader then can expose the larger simulacra and attempts of simulation through the text's treatment of life and death. Life—a constant panic attack that positively reflects on the dead—and death—a

constantly perturbing terror that haunts the living—seems to create new meanings for themselves. The audience sees this revival of the dead through the living in the characters Jack and Murray. The course subjects that Murray and Jack teach, Elvis and Hitler studies respectively, feed popular culture and their glorification of life after it ceases to exist. Baudrillard defines this as “a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity” (Baudrillard, par,15). Murray and Jack’s revival of popular world icons like Elvis Presley and Adolf Hitler pontificate a sense of nostalgic meaning to a society preoccupied with symbolism. Baudrillard explains this as “a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. And there is a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production. This is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us: a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal, whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence” (Baudrillard, par.16). If then, Jack and Murray search for meaning in death, where does life gain its essence in *White Noise*?

The answer transcends through the living characters themselves, specifically, through the narrator, Jack Gladney. *White Noise* thrusts its reader even further into the hyperreal to the point where Jack’s perceptions of binary existences run askew. Moreover, his irrational fears and thoughts of looming death ultimately bring life to death, as he constantly experiences subjective fear of death. Early in the novel, Jack ponders the experience of death, wondering, “Is this what it’s like, abrupt, peremptory? Shouldn’t death, I thought, be a swan dive, graceful, white-winged and smooth, leaving the surface undisturbed?” (DeLillo 18). Later, Jack

The Gladney family’s obsessions, particularly Jack’s preoccupation with death, consume the characters to such an extent that it seems to render each person mentally isolated. The aforementioned alienation seems to work in conjunction with Baudrillard’s idea of hyperreality;

he asserts that the alienated's compulsions with an artificially created fear forces the alienated to be easily manipulated or deceived, which in turn, undermines the initial fear. The alienist, of course, claims that "for each form of the mental alienation there is a particular order in the succession of symptoms, of which the simulator is unaware and in the absence of which the alienist is unlikely to be deceived." (Baudrillard par.6). As Baudrillard explains, this form of alienation does not solely remove the joys of living; rather, it makes the characters more susceptible to suffer symptoms which feed into their fears even more. This is best exemplified with the Gladney family and the airborne toxic event. The news tells the Gladneys that the subsequent effects on human health are manifested through sweaty palms and persistent déjà vu. When Jack's daughter experiences these symptoms, he wonders, "Is there a true déjà vu and a false déjà vu? I wondered whether her palms had been truly sweaty, or whether she'd simply imagined a sense of wetness. And was she so open to suggestion that she would develop every symptom as it was announced?" (DeLillo 126). This constant state of hypochondria and simulation renders the characters isolated, paranoid and reinventing symptoms that are inferred to lead to their demise. Thus, existence is consumed by death in *White Noise*.

If existence seems to be a preoccupation for death, *White Noise* seems to assert that life itself ceases to exist. However, through simulacra, death appears to be a function of life. According to Baudrillard, the Gladney's déjà vu and the irrational fear of death serve as a mechanism to give power to life. Baudrillard argues that déjà vu is simply a defense mechanism used to prepare one for their fear. Baudrillard states, "To seek new blood in its own death, to renew the cycle by the mirror of crisis, negativity and anti-power: this is the only alibi of every power, of every institution attempting to break the vicious circle of its irresponsibility and its fundamental nonexistence, of its déjà-vu and its déjà-mort." (Baudrillard, par.37). Murray seems

Introduction to "The Edge"

The following piece is entitled "The Edge." I wrote this piece in the spring of 2012 for ENGL 310 Advanced Expository Writing with Professor Nick Tryling. The following essay was the first of our assigned essays, and it was based off of an interview assignment we conducted the week prior. In this "shaped profile," we were instructed to interview anyone—a coworker, friend, stranger or neighbor. After transcribing the interviews, we were given the narrative freedom to write a piece incorporating the interview. As a first assignment, this piece appropriately introduced me into a new world of writing I had not visited until enrolling in Advanced Expository Writing. Because I wrote for the *Ranger News* and had a lot of experience interviewing strangers, I decided to dig for a personal story that intrigued me.

For this assignment, I interviewed my best friend, who happened to be my neighbor until he and his family moved to Arizona in 2010. Because we grew up together, our friendship's bond withstood his many near death experiences and years of drug abuse. However, shortly after moving to Arizona, my friend had a life changing experience, which ended with him dragging from a car and left in the middle of the desert. Despite the fact he had many near death experiences, jail sentences and rehab visits, he refused to change, until after this violent event, which lead him to enroll in college, get a job and remain completely sober. Though he was always a very open person, he kept this story to himself. After some convincing, he finally agreed to tell me the full story for this project. In a series of many three hour phone conversations, he gave me all of the information that comprises the following story. I decided to juxtapose incidents from his week of heroine and methamphetamines with images of our childhood and innocence. All of the events were true, and all of the quotes were exact. Because of this, I developed a severe attachment to the piece, as I was essentially a part of it. This is

where my problem arose: while the piece was intended for my class as a workshop audience, I had considered myself too heavily in writing the piece.

Thus, I am confident that this piece embodies the collaborative learning goal. It took extensive interviewing and communication to craft the story, but more importantly, it required the input of my peers. The following essay is the third draft of this piece. The initial ending, in continuity with the final scene of my friend being dragged by a car, reminisced to a time when my friend and I rode around in his motorized jeep as preschoolers, sharing a box of tactics and talking about being “grown-ups.” I was passionate about the ending for its nostalgic elements and stark juxtaposition; however, my classmates felt I should cut that ending out. Not only did they feel the new ending would be more climactic, but they felt my memory did not carry the same emotional weight with them as it did with me. In addition, each of my classmates received a printed copy, on which they wrote corrections and suggestions. I considered every classmate’s input when writing the final draft, and I wound up adhering to at least one suggestion from every peer. I learned that no matter how much control or emotion I have invested in a topic, writing is a never ending process that requires constant feedback from readers and fellow writers. Therefore, this is a classic example of considering the input and opinion of fellow peers and readers.

Some of the suggestions I took from peers pertained to the structure and time lapses between events. Prior to this class, I had always followed the five paragraph structure to a tee, writing a complex thesis statement, followed by logical body paragraphs and tied together with a cohesive bow in the conclusion. This particular essay, as well as Advanced Expository Writing, pushed my structural parameters. I learned that the elements and orders of essays can be broken, inverted, juxtaposed, complimentary, braided together and even rebuilt. Based on the

compelling readings Professor Tryling assigned, as well as the feedback of my peers, I learned to push my comfort zone and write in new ways I had not previously considered. Though I was nervous about switching from past to present, my peers assured me where it worked well, and where I could have used less time juxtaposition. Thus, in addition to showing my exceptional ability to collaborate, this following text shows my versatility and growth as a writer in unfamiliar territory.

Professor Tryling
Shaped Profile

“The Edge”

“There was a certain beauty to needles—to imagining myself injecting needles in my veins. I cannot explain it,” recalls our protagonist. “I had been staring at my arm for days, just searching for good veins. I wanted to figure out where I could shoot up.”

He sat in a dingy, candle lit apartment with his former rehab mate, Wyatt. If drug rehabilitation centers are good for anything, it is certainly feeding into the nepotism of underground drug markets. People now network on national levels. Our protagonist met Wyatt in a rehabilitation center in Illinois; yet, here they sat as counterparts, on a dirty apartment floor, in Glendale, Arizona.

“Wyatt wanted me to smoke it for my first time, but it was an obsession; all of the stories I had heard in rehab made me curious. I wanted to shoot up.”

On that foul apartment floor, our protagonist watched in awe, as the candle light illuminated a silver needle, sucking and flushing black liquid onto a spoon until the concoction was just right.


“There are two types of heroine,” our protagonist explains. “First, there is White China, which is fine and dissolves in water. And then, you have what we get down here, close Mexico. You get Black Tar.”

“First, you fill a syringe with water. Black Tar is sort of like putty—you have to roll it into a little ball. Put that on the spoon. You inject just enough water before the spoon overflows. Get rid of the extra water; you won’t need it. You go through a process of flushing water throughout the Black Tar. It’s water soluble, sort of like sugar. Eventually, it’s ready. We tested it with a toothpick. You take the end of a cigarette filter, and you stick the needle through the cotton.”

Wyatt and his girlfriend, a stripper and deadbeat mother named Marie, had forfeited electricity to afford their addictions. It did not matter to our protagonist, who had compulsively searched his arm, and knew exactly where he wanted the needle to pierce his virgin veins.

“He took my arm and looked for good veins, which I had already scouted out. He slapped the spot for a while. He inserted the needle into the vein just a bit. Once you’ve hit blood, it will flood up the needle and into the syringe. That’s when you’re ready.”

With the flick of a Bic, the tap of two fingers and a simple push of a syringe, our protagonist injected heroine into his body for the first time.



"It was only halfway in, and I felt like a million bucks. You know, heroine dealers are the worst kind of people out there. They know that once you try it, they have you hooked. They rob you. But that was one hell of a night."

Flash back to 1995 in a new neighborhood in its developmental process. Young families are moving into newly erect houses, while others are plotting out where they want theirs to be built. Cookie cutter houses look like custom built palaces when they stand next to hollowed out pits. With sunlight illuminating his white blonde, spiky hair, our four year old protagonist, is teetering on a plank, over what has the potential to be a basement, or a death pit. An alarmed neighbor sees the unattended four year old, as his strap on Velcro Spiderman sandals move with uneasiness across the ledge. Each wobbly step is one apprehensive inch closer towards a premature, concrete death. She quickly calls him in. The four year old protagonist would flirt with danger for the next 15 years of his life. The worried neighbor, the unknowing parents, the rehabilitation centers, the parole officers—none of them could have imagined that living on the edge is what would one day save this boy's life.

"I get such a thrill out of being spontaneous," says our protagonist. "Sometimes, it's in the wrong place in the wrong time, but for me, I tend to think it's the right place and the right time. I love my life being hectic and crazy."

It is now the day after the black tar drowned our protagonist's blue veins. He is now sitting in a chair as Wyatt pulls a stripper's bra tighter around his arm. Cutting off all circulation, the devil asks, "You want to feel something crazy? Something you've never felt before?" He slides a needle into our protagonist's bulging vein.

"My brain started tingling. Instantly, the back of my head had the weirdest sensation. All I had wanted was some more heroine, but we couldn't afford it. Meth is the cheapest drug out there."

Flash back to 1999. Our protagonist stands in a kitchen with his mother, who has brilliant blonde hair like her son. Her son is complaining of a headache, and she tells him to stick out his hand. She places a little pill in the eight year old's palm. The little pill, intended to diminish his headache, would gradually build up a tolerance over the next eleven years that would leave the protagonist constantly searching for a new high. The eight year old protagonist's headache was soon a thing of the past; though, he felt his body succumb to a strange tranquility. Many health teachers say that marijuana is a gateway drug; for our eight year old protagonist, a new friend named Vicodin beat Mary Jane to the punch.

Fast forward to 2010, where our protagonist no longer has a tingling feeling in the back of his brain. He and the devil needed another fix, and they needed it quickly. The devil, the stripper,

Introduction to Avon Township Community Foundation

The following piece is entitled "Avon Township Community Foundation." I completed this article in July of 2012, as part of my summer writing internship with Shaw Media and the *Lake County Journal*. The *Lake County Journal* is a free, weekly newspaper that is extremely prevalent in Lake County, Illinois. I interned here from May until August of 2012 for 20 hours per week, while balancing my 45 hour per week job as a camp counselor. After I finished my internship at the end of August, my editor offered me a position as a freelance reporter.

Because of this time conflict, I found myself spending nine hour days in the sun, rushing to the camp's locker room to shower and look presentable, and then rushing off to Gurnee, Waukegan, Lake Villa and Grayslake to catch people at their places of business before they would leave the office. I spent many nights tracking down cell phone numbers and home phone numbers and scheduling evening phone interviews. My writing felt pressured and rushed to meet the deadlines, despite the fact the *Lake County Journal* is a weekly paper. However, despite my tight schedule, I feel as though this internship provided me with valuable journalistic skills. I learned the persistency required of journalists in real life settings. As a highly considerate person, I often aired on the side of caution when trying to contact people and dig for stories. My internship forced me out of my comfort zone, as I learned the persistency and relentless nature of reporting and interviewing. More importantly, I learned the extremely meticulous nature of fact checking, spell checking and revising that goes into a single piece.

As a county paper, our stories were more community based and light hearted in comparison to the hard hitting political news and music news I am enamored with. However, despite the tone of the stories, I learned that all journalism requires a great amount of attention

and integrity. Over the course of my internship, I was assigned a variety of stories. As an intern reporter, I should have figured I would start out at the lowest of the journalistic totem pole.

Some of my early story assignments included the grand opening of an assisted living home and Pet Land's annual Daschund derby races. Eventually, I was given a column and multiple cover stories, including the following piece. During one of our weekly meetings, my editor asked all reporters for cover story ideas for a "dead week" after the Fourth of July. I offered the idea of homelessness being a year-round problem, as many people neglect to recognize the summer time as a time of need for the less fortunate. From there, I found out about local community gardens that grew food for the needy. In my own community, the Avon Township Community Center offered both gardens and a "choice" pantry. These aimed to both eliminate the dehumanizing aspects of systematic food pantries, as well as the continued reliance on these services. In giving the less fortunate the tools to provide for themselves, Avon Township inspired a sense of autonomy in the people it assisted. After conducting several interviews with President Wendy Warden and touring the gardens, I looked to other local gardens and the Illinois Department of Agriculture to broaden my scope, as hunger is not strictly a local problem. Through my extensive research and interviews with Avon Township members, I was able to invent and compile my first of many cover stories for the Journal. The meticulous fact checking I did on state and local agricultural sites helped connect my interviews to the overall story. Because this piece drew from multiple people and sources and was credited as a cover story, I feel it exemplifies my strong ability to integrate thorough research into my writing.

Avon Township Community Foundation

Imagine you and your family are sitting in one of the many family caravans that line a North Chicago church. When your vehicle pulls up, you are instructed to get out, open the trunk and then return to the car. You move up a few more spots, and a person appears, loads a large box into your trunk, slams it shut, and taps the back bumper hard, signaling that it is time for you to drive away. Add hunger into the mixture. Factor in the loss of dignity, and the amounts of pride you are trying to hold onto, while knowing regardless of what the box may contain, you must enjoy it for the next few days.

These are the systematic, dehumanizing aspects of food pantries that Avon Township Community Foundation President Wendy Warden remembers witnessing during her childhood. Rather than treat her benefactors like components in an assembly line, Warden strives to maintain the dignity and sense of community in the families she serves each month.

Now, picture a quaint garden, conveniently located next to Washington Street with the tranquility of a rural farm. There are children playing amongst colorful flowers and alongside a large fountain. The center of the garden is welcoming in its circular in shape. This is the picture of the Avon Township Community Foundation, which is just one of many community gardens that hopes to feed the community while planting the seeds of self-sustainability.

The garden is located just outside the Avon Township Community Foundation's Food Pantry. The foundation is a 501©3 not-for-profit organization, which feeds approximately 550 families each month.

The Foundation formed the pantry and garden to fulfill an unmet need for food in the Avon Township community. Of the 65,000 residents in the Avon Township area, it is a necessity for the 2,376 people the foundation serves each month.

While food pantries operate year round, the gardens are a necessity in the summer months, as food is in higher demand. Contrary to popular belief, families needing aide often need more in the summer months.

Warden says that their 550 families per month figure is based on an average family size of 3.8. According to the U.S Department of Agriculture's May 2012 figure, a family of four with children above the age of five needed to spend at least \$626.20 per month on groceries. That number is expected to increase during the summer months.

The schools within the Avon Township area are among many other schools in the nation that provide both breakfast and lunch to students, leaving only dinner and any snacks in the hands of the parents. However, when children are home for the summer, their parents must provide all three meals during the day.

"The trend is to think that when it's cold, people are at risk for food and shelter," said Warden.

“It is a constant concern for that part of the society, it is a year round risk that we need to be aware of. “

As a result, the Avon Township Community Foundation started their choice pantry and community garden to fulfill these unmet needs, while encouraging sustainability and respect.

As an emergency food pantry, each family is permitted to visit once per month, where they receive a three-day supply of three meals for each family member. When families come to pick up food, they interact with the volunteers, who encourage families by offering resources that will help them get back on their feet. Benefactors of the pantry are also permitted to have their own plot of land in the garden, where they can grow their own food for free.

“We want to help people take the next step, because we realize that no one likes to visit the food pantry,” said Warden. “Asking for food is not a fun part of anyone’s month. If there is a way to help, we would love to do it. We would love to put ourselves out of business. We want everyone to do what they need to do to take care of themselves, and to be the healthiest, best family or individual they can be.”

The gardens perpetuate just that idea. Take a walk around the corner of the blue Avon Township building, and there are two large gardens that will greet you. The production garden is a 6,000 square foot garden planted, tilled and tended to by volunteers. All of the food produced goes directly towards the pantry recipients. Then, amongst the middle of a circular plot are 28 10x20 plots for community members to rent for the season.

Anyone from the community can rent a plot for \$35 for the season. The cost is reduced to only \$20 if the renter chooses to donate their abundance to the pantry. In the last two years, every single gardener chose to donate his or her crops to the needy.

The land behind the Township building was perfect for furthering the community mission. The soil had never received any pesticides and only needed magnesium. Warden insisted on creating the gardens in a circular shape to encourage community interactions. Currently, the gardens remain completely organic, and each plot is full.

In its opening year, Avon Township Food Pantry received 95% of its goods from the Northern Illinois food bank. Now, in its third year and with the great support of both the gardens, that statistic has decreased, as the gardens produce over two tons of produce each season.

Community gardens are not unique to the Avon Township or Lake County. In fact, the resurgence of agriculture seems to be a trend. The American Community Gardening Association estimates that there are more than 18,000 in the United States and Canada.

Four years ago, the Illinois Department of Agriculture opened a 172-plot garden for the

Dr. Lenard

ENG 495

17 November, 2012

The Ten-Fold of Meg Murray's Ontological Journey

Children's Literature has intertwined itself in the Fantasy genre. As a means of relaying greater religious and moral message to children, writers often create worlds where the ordinary disguises itself as the extraordinary. Fantasy theorist Jack Zipes recognizes this principle of fantasy, as he states, "We all have fantasy, and through fantasy we seek to encounter the voids in our lives by generating visions of how we want to live and realize whatever potential we have," (Zipes 90). Zipes' perception of the fantastic speaks true to the themes found embedded in Children's Literature, and the way fantasy invites the child reader. Often in Children's Literature, an altruistic child with one or more absentee parents steps up to be the child reader's hero and surrogate through the course of the novel, as he or she embarks on larger than life journeys with the aid of an older, sometimes omniscient character's guidance. The composite structure of events leads the reader, through the lens of the young protagonist, to inadvertently experience cultures and political implications that exist in the tangible world around the young reader. The young reader, curled up in bed, in a tree house, in a library corner or on a patio chair, allows the fictitious imagery to disconnect the story's commentary on reality from the reality that surrounds the reader. Moreover, young readers may be unaware that the books in their hands are the derivative of the same

reality from which they seek refuge. And, as Zipes mentions, the young reader may or may not be aware of his or her own capabilities.

Madeline L'Engle's 1962 novel *A Wrinkle in Time* follows the aforementioned fantastic structure and protagonist development with her heroine Margaret "Meg" Murray. Meg, unsure of herself and plagued by mediocrity and the school system's flawed measuring stick, serves as a plausible vehicle for the preadolescent reader in an equally unsure Cold War stricken America. It is no coincidence that the three guiding, theoretically omniscient forces in the novel inquire who, what and which. Interrogative pronouns are commonly taught as early as elementary school, and force the reader to ask questions. Throughout the course of *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg's uncertainty with herself runs parallel to the story's central ability to subtly ask questions. In disguising the rudimentary questions children are taught in grade school—who, what, when, where, why, and sometimes, how and which—Meg learns to ask these questions throughout her metaphysical journey as she travels through the fifth dimension. Using the tesseract, an extraterrestrial hole and portal throughout the novel, Meg is able to travel through time and dimension to discover the answers to these questions. With Meg as the reader's personal fifth dimension chauffeur, L'Engle invites the reader to step outside their realm of normalcy to experience another—one that is both subtly and overtly reliant on question asking, and one that is accessed through the fifth dimension.

In asking these five questions in the fifth dimension, Meg ultimately walks away with a better understanding of herself, as asking these questions seems imperative to appreciating herself and doubting the world around her. This sense of distrust and doubt within religious

institutions is often associated with nihilism. This idea has perpetuated immense criticism from Christian groups, primarily from the Jerry Falwell ministries, who claim the book “undermines religious beliefs and challenges the idea of God” (Banned, par.8). Subsequently, 26 publishers have rejected this book, and L’Engle remains one of the ten most banned writers (Madeleine 2000). Despite this contention, the novel does not leave readers, who have attached themselves to Meg, in a hedonistic bout of onset nihilism. Though nihilism, or the rejection of meaningful existence and objective truth, often refuses to value faith in religious systems, L’Engle’s use of questions does not seem to point to metaphysically hollow answers. Rather, *A Wrinkle in Time* addresses deeper, metaphysical elements that Aristotle’s ten categories of existence seek to explain. These ten principles, often called predicates, indicate that there is proof of meaning and existence. This is referred to as the Ontological argument for existence. Aristotle’s ten predicates run in conjunction with both the questions and plot structure of *A Wrinkle in Time*. In peeling back the layers of questions in *A Wrinkle in Time*, the reader is not left with a nihilistic pit; rather, the reader can find meaning in the Ontological argument. Thus, Meg Murray’s journey is not defined by liberating syntax that leads preadolescent readers to an existential enlightenment; rather, *A Wrinkle in Time* manipulates the five fundamental questions of rhetoric to point to an Ontological explanation that is in fact tenfold. This essay will focus on the development and structure of Meg Murray as both a character and a vehicle throughout *A Wrinkle in Time* in relation to the standard five questions asked subtly throughout the plot. Ultimately, these questions and their metaphysical undertones will lend themselves well to showing the congruence between *A*