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Egg

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# The Ashen Egg

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Submission guidelines: *The Ashen Egg* is an annual journal publishing essays on literature, rhetoric, linguistics, film, and popular culture. Any current Western Kentucky University undergraduate student may submit work for consideration. Submissions must be endorsed by an English Department faculty member who confirms the submission as a piece produced for one of the faculty member's courses and approves it as worthy for publication. Manuscripts may range from 750 to 3000 words, though exceptions may be made for submissions of stellar quality. Literature, film, and pop culture essays must follow the Modern Language Association style guidelines as

defined in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (latest edition); essays on linguistics or professional writing topics may use APA (latest edition). Submissions must be received in CH 135 no later than November 1 and must be accompanied by the cover sheet and endorsement form to be considered.

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## NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Ella Corder** graduates in May. Right now, little beady-eyed men peer downnose at her applications to their post-baccalaureate pre-medical schools, ties loosened, industrial pens poised, ordering venison from their secretaries, brows furrowing once they get to her skinny *EXPERIENCE* section, her tentative future floating in and out of reach with the suction and erection of their long nose hairs.

**Katie Doll** is a senior Creative Writing major with a minor in Film Studies. She originates from Greenbrier, Tennessee, and went to Volunteer State Community College for her first two years of undergraduate studies. She hopes to write for film and television in the future and further her education in graduate school to teach English and film. Outside of class, she co-hosts a podcast called *Courage & Doll*, where she and her friend review hilariously bad films. She would like to thank Dr. Trini Stickle for her encouragement and assistance during the revision process.

**Sarah Lyons** is a senior English for Secondary Teachers major from Bullitt County, Kentucky. She is currently student teaching tenth graders in Allen County, and she spends most of her time grading, lesson planning, reading, gaming, and baking pizzas. She believes that the most valuable thing students can get from an English classroom is content-area literacy skills and a curiosity for themes embedded in our world. She would like to thank her encouraging sponsor and mother.

**Abigail Raley** is a poet and essayist from Bowling Green, Kentucky. Her work is featured in journals such as *The Macksey Journal*, *Not Your Mother's Breast Milk*, and *Zephyrus*. Her studies in theatre and

performance studies have focused her work on gendered experience in theatrical study, performative gender, as well as gendered violence in Shakespearean texts. Her poetry is preoccupied with the Southern aesthete, defining the feminine experience, and familial lineage. Her work is largely inspired by poets such as Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and Audre Lorde. She plans on completing her undergraduate degree and pursuing her MFA in Poetry.

**Joseph Shoulders** is a sophomore from Adairville, KY. In the words of Dr. Hovet, Joseph is a Gatton alumnus converted to an English major. His concentration is Literature, and his minor is American Sign Language Studies. For two semesters, he interned for the English Department as a Story and Profile Writer. Joseph is currently planning a novel to write for his Honors College CE/T project. He aims to write several novels incorporating his love of dynamic literature with his advocacy for positive queer representation.

**Hanna Van Winkle** is a senior and native of Slaughters, KY. She is double majoring in English with a concentration in Professional Writing and Communication Studies and is also enrolled in the Joint Undergraduate Master's Program for Student Affairs in Higher Education. She currently works for the Office of Admissions as a tour guide and the Topper Orientation Program, and is involved in several clubs and organizations, including the Potter College of Arts and Letters Dean's Council of Students. She loves reading, baking and decorating cakes, spending time with friends and family, and talking about WKU and the English Department.

**Caitlyn Woitena** is a sophomore here at WKU majoring in English for Secondary Teachers. Originally hailing all the way from Houston, Texas, she came to WKU to compete for the highly esteemed Forensics Team in platform and interpretation events. She was named "best in conference" in WKU's 20th Annual Undergraduate Conference on Language, Literature, and Culture. She would like to thank Dr. Trini Stickle for all her encouragement and help throughout the revision process. Outside of her studies, Caitlyn enjoys working as a debate coach for schools around the

nation, reading about education policy, and walking her dog, Winston.



## *PLOT (V.)*

*by Ella Corder*

Four score and seven minutes ago, I exited my Prius to see on the sad sidewalk of my apartment complex the sweatshirted chest and back of a man squeezed like an artery by the separate chests of a young woman and man who were listing expletives rather enthusiastically to each other as the GROSS, Inc. dumpster truck lifted the dumpster with its haunches and shook out the contents like bitters. The man in the middle was eventually persuaded by their fists to stand elsewhere; while he was away, the pair writhed and pulled like copulating snakes before the man delivered a strong right hook that introduced the woman's mandible and top three teeth to the sidewalk. Someone's brassiere hung alone from the upside-down dumpster, snagged on a hook. It jolted and bounced before the operator gave up and sailed down the street.

Plot, as writers understand it, plot-the-noun, plot that everyone discusses in very close range with words like "weakness" and "hole," is, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the "plan or scheme of a literary or dramatic work; the main events...considered or presented as an interrelated sequence; a storyline" (*OED.com*). These definitions are important. As Maya Sonenberg says in "Beyond the Plot Triangle," after whose critiques of plot I've fashioned this craft essay, "Fiction writers learn that plot's the norm and all other forms abnormal" (Sonenberg 105). Writers relentlessly try to define it formulaically, and, in doing so, they hope to gain some

control over it, to have a clear answer to this elusive and, they have been told, all-important thing. Sonenberg continues: “These [plot] questions have felt at times game-like, hypothesis-like, philosophical, studious, scientific, metaphysical, theoretical, but the answers, provisional though they might be, have never been frivolous” (Sonenberg 110). O, what provisions have failed us! Act I, II, III. Causeeffectcauseeffect denouement—in “Is Narrative ‘The Description of Fictional Mental Functioning?’” Jonas Grethlein argues, “It is not the consciousness of the characters, but the temporal dynamics of the plot that pull the reader into the story” (Grethlein). As if blood dripping from a young woman’s mouth onto a fire hydrant is Act I, II, III, cause-effect, “temporal dynamics.”

Barebacked on bathtub porcelain, the faucet runs mostly in my eyes and mouth and traces the creases of my neck with its fingers. I have never seen a man hit a woman before. He had done it tentatively; even as she scratched his eyes out, beat his head like eggs, a fistful of his hair in her sweaty acrylic-nailed palm, he had hit her like a young boy darting forward suddenly to kiss a girl in the car at a drive-in, recoiling slightly.

I didn’t think to call the police, but my friend did. I asked what the police could possibly do in this couple’s situation, one so obviously tender and with history, with anger and blood and guilt and lust. He reminded me that police do not care about the fight: they care about things like *instigator* and *altercation* and *domestic disturbance*. I reminded him that uniforms come off and that that particular policeman who takes a full minute to squat and grunt and then finally stand up from his car, adjust his belt, and reach back in for a few things, he who leaves the lights on and the engine running, Mr. Officer SOP, will interrogate the subject and take notes and write his citations and submit a report and go home, strip off his badge, let his pride soak out into the bathwater through osmosis, and then crawl in bed later beside his pale, thin, sleeping wife who hasn’t touched him in a year and sleep naked because his A/C is out and

stare at the beige ceiling and see nothing but the blood dripping from the young woman's swollen lips—huge, four feet tall on the ceiling—dripping down on him looking like his own lips behind his black mask and wonder why why why the fight had happened.

To write is to sit in a bathtub and examine the water in every pore. To crawl inside a feeling for a while. The scent of the candles, the glow of the paraben-free honey-infused shampoo. It is not the bathtub's slow fill, the volume of water that your thighs displace, the filling then scrubbing then rinsing then draining. "Writing about mothering young children and caring for aging parents at the same time," Sonenberg says, "I saw how plot truly can't convey all the facets of human life we might want to write about...Emotions, events, and personalities swirled, repeated, co-existed, and flip-flopped"—(is this not life?)—"rather than culminated in a climax during which one 'won out' over the others" (Sonenberg 107). O, the tears of a million writers hit a million dirty, wooly-with-dust linoleum floors, O, the whiny, chattering sound of complaining. The writers complain: they just cannot for the life of them construct a neat, 2-D plot. It is weak; it is slow; it is fast; it has holes; it oversimplifies. It makes them itchy in their beds at night; what is the cure to this inability? Here, it is clear that the *OED* falls short: how can Sonenberg's stories, can life itself, possibly be misconstrued as the "plan or scheme," or "the main events...considered or presented as an interrelated sequence; a *storyline*"?

Cold and unnoticed halfway down the page, the *OED* continues: plot-the-verb, the transitive verb, it says, in definition 2b, is "to draw to scale; to *mark* (a point, course, etc.) on a chart, map, etc." (*OED.com*, ital. added). But what of the plan, the main story? What of Freytag and climax and beginnings and endings?

It is *this*. A good plot *marks* (a point, course, etc.) the story on a map or chart. Plot development, plot strength: it does not mean plot-the-noun, the rising and the falling. It is plot-the-verb. It is a note, a

web in a moment, a remark on the human state. Plot calls out, begs to bear this definition, 2b or not to be.

This is not to say that traditional plot has no value. It matters that, at the end of *The Great Gatsby*, he dies. And it matters that he loved Daisy first—these things couldn't be muddled, switched. It matters that Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* traces first the life of Eugene Gant's father and *then* of Eugene, and that he grows as the book grows. It matters that we are born and *then* have our cords cut. But life is not about these chronologies; this is not how we look back at our births or our books. It is the color of an entire moment at which we peer backward.

What do we stand to gain from teaching literature this way? What do we stand to lose?

To be linear is to be simple. Exposition: Boy meets girl, girl loves boy, they fall into the comfortable and easy relationship that comes with living in such close proximity, trot down the hallway in pajamas carrying oatmeal bowl to visit. Rising Action/Conflict: Boy loses job, has more leisure time, girl develops suspicion. Climax: Girl finds friend's stringy Kmart underwear in boy's bed while sneaking through apartment, kills his cat in her fury. Confides in boy no. 2, who provides certain kinds of consolation. Boy finds dead cat, all three meet outside, expletives are exchanged, tension builds, and the girl is face-down on the sidewalk, quiet. Falling Action: All walk away, leave her there. Sirens in the distance. She rises, examines her face in the reflection of her phone's glass. Resolution: A middle-aged officer slowly pulls his cruiser up to the sidewalk. Provides the law's type of resolution. The cat is buried, a replacement is bought.

But, of course, this is not really even linear. To read a story like this is to imagine a million little jumps of a million little neurons that drive what we do; it is to feel at once tension and wanting and understanding; we are too complex for two-dimensionality. We are marks on a chart. A map.

A good story is always and should be a painting. To borrow plot-the-noun's terms, it is always and should be **CLIMAX, CONCLUSION, INTRODUCTION**, just like that. You stand in front of a Gauguin with your museum map and your inhibitions and suddenly you're weeping at first sight; you have not analyzed it. You do not read it chronologically. Freytag is bound and muzzled in the corner. There is no translation, no development, no foreplay, just altogether **CLIMAX**. This must come first.

And then there is **CONCLUSION**. *Shit*, you realize, as the story you have just seen in oil on canvas immediately makes utter sense. It looks back at you and draws its own conclusions. Walking away down the street afterward, you trip on the sidewalk in your stupor. This is **INTRODUCTION**. This is always at the end. It is ridiculous to put it at the beginning. *Yes, and...* you think to yourself, water in every pore.

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POWER AND VULNERABILITY IN FICTIONAL LANGUAGES:  
LINGUISTIC INJURY IN *GAME OF THRONES*

by Katie Doll

**Introduction**

Creative works categorizing themselves as fantasy often employ fictional languages, the phenomena of which is a growing linguistic interest. Many of these languages take on incomprehensible forms to accommodate characters' muteness, while other fictional languages represent cultural variations. Two current examples of fictional languages are the Dothraki and the Valyrian languages from the HBO series *Game of Thrones*. A close analysis of the lexical, phonetic, and syntactic structures of these languages reveals how the cultures of exclusion and violence are, in part, created through linguistic features.

**Background Information**

*Game of Thrones* is a television show produced from 2011 to 2019, but it is based on the novel series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R. R. Martin, which began in 1996. The show is set in a medieval-inspired land called the Seven Kingdoms, where different family and geographic cultures interact. This paper will illustrate the use of fictional language through the harsh predicaments of the character Daenerys Targaryen, the exiled member of the royal family, who spends the entirety of the series learning new languages and cultures in order to regain her reign of the Seven Kingdoms.

## Methodology

The data for this case study come from excerpts from *Game of Thrones* episodes “Winter is Coming,” “Blood of My Blood,” and “The Iron Throne” (2011; 2016; 2019). Scenes from *Game of Thrones* include a speech given by Daenerys Targaryen after she has burned down the city of King’s Landing to overthrow the throne and proclaim herself Queen of the Seven Kingdoms (Benoiff & Weiss, 2019). The speech’s transcript shows the Valyrian language contains letters and sounds common to English, German, and Russian. The sounds and the distribution of those sounds (phonemes and phonemic patterns) suggest a harshness to listeners. Other shorter scenes that contain the Dothraki language will also be analyzed. Additionally, the lexical and syntactic structures of language will be shown to reinforce the hateful and war-bound culture among the Dothraki.

## What the Languages Tell Us: Findings

### *Valyrian*

In Daenerys’ speech, the “sh” or /ʃ/ sound is used and enunciated multiple times (Benoiff & Weiss, 2019). Below is a sampling along with translations:

Shafka: you

Shiqethi: iron

Rhaeshis: Kingdoms

While these terms alone are not hateful, it is cacophony—using consonant clusters in particular combinations—that creates an explosive delivery. Using the sounds /p/, /b/, /d/, /g/, /k/, /tʃ/ (or ch-), and /ʃ/ (or sh-) together emulates the harshness or onomatopoeic association with destructive processes (e.g., rushing water or bursting objects).

Similarly, the letter “d” and sound of /d/ is also prominent in many of the language’s words:

Daeredat – tyrant

Daeredoty – our spears

Dovaogedys – unsullied

Here, the double presence of “d” adds a negative connotation with the words “tyrant” and “our spears.” This alliteration creates momentary dissonance in the listener. The /d/ sound is also significant to Daenerys and Drogon, her dragon. The letter “d” is associated with horrible events such as death and destruction.

According to the creator of Valyrian and Dothraki, David J. Peterson, Valyrian’s sentence structure is one of subject-object-verb, unlike the English structure of subject-verb-object, which is shared by the structure of the Common Tongue language, as it is known in the series (WIRED, 2019). In a video interview, Peterson further explains the reasoning behind changing the sentence structure for Valyrian: “If every single thing, word for word [is] exactly as English is, right in a row, then you really haven’t done anything interesting” (WIRED, 2019). The difference also creates a dissonance in the listener by placing the subject and any objects in first and second positions and ending with the verb: Vala (n. man, subject) ábre (n. woman, direct object) urnes (v. sees, third-person singular agreement).

### ***Dothraki***

The lexical choices are also some of the most important factors in the violent world that Martin has created. “There is no word for ‘thank you’ in Dothraki” (Benoiff, Weiss, & Patten, 2011), says Ser Jorah to Daenerys on her wedding day after she had been gifted a white horse by her husband, Drogo. This is one of the first translations of the Dothraki language in the series, and it shows that the Dothraki people do not believe in gratitude or love. They believe in fear and greed, and their language represents those beliefs. They also do not have a word for “love,” as it is a concept unknown to them. Instead, when they want to show affection, they say “Yer



shekh ma shieraki” and “Yer jalan atthirari anni,” meaning “you are my sun and stars” and “you are the moon of my life,” respectively. Although this practice could be deemed romantic, it more often shows that, since the Dothraki do not know the concept of love, they must equate their affection to objects because these are things that are known in this world and that they desire most. The sun, stars, and moon are comprehensible to them because the Dothraki can physically see them, but, since love is an idea and a social construct, they do not understand it. Yet, they do understand acts of horror.

If there is one thing the Dothraki are good at, it is killing, which is why they have three verbs for the act: *addrivat*, *drozhat*, and *ogat*. All three words have slightly different translations depending on the state of the killer.

*Addrivat*: “to make something be dead,” for a sentient killer.

*Drozhat*: “to slay,” for an inanimate killer or animal.

*Ogat*: “to slaughter,” when referring to killing animals for the purpose of eating.

Given that the first description of the Dothraki people describes them as “savages,” there is an implication that their language is used throughout the series to gain power. In the episode “Blood of My Blood,” Daenerys gives a speech in Dothraki to proclaim everyone her “bloodriders,” a common Dothraki term used to describe people who are loyal to their Khal or Khaleesi (Cogman & Bender, 2016). The term “blood,” when describing supporters, also indicates a level of extremity. When speaking to family, the Dothraki typically call each other “blood of my blood.” Since blood typically has a connection to harm or pain, it sets a negative tone that may scare away non-native speakers, but, for the Dothraki, it means family or sacrifice for family.

Sound is also important in Dothraki. The word “*zhey*” is used as a vocative particle—a word that precedes an address to gain

attention—in the Dothraki language and was used in old Romance languages, as well as in Germanic languages such as English and German. It is pronounced as “jay” or /dʒei/, which is the guttural sound that English speakers hear from German, such as “j” or /dʒ/, “ch” or /tʃ/, and the uvular fricative “r.” These sounds are produced to imitate harsh conditions and to grab the listener’s attention.

## Discussion

It is important to note that the two languages studied here have similar repetitive sounds such as “sh” and double consonants using “d.” Given these are used to create harsh connotations, one can assume that these languages were influenced by Germanic and Slavic languages, such as German, Russian, and Polish. In *The Sounds and History of the German Language*, historical linguist Eduard Prokosch makes a comparison between different languages based on their phonetic bases as the most dominant note of a language: “the ever-youthful strength of German, the self-restrained calmness of English, the ‘insinuating charm’ of Russian” (Prokosch, 1918, p. 48) are reflected in their sound structures. The power of language to help create a harsh environment is aptly seen in Peterson’s invention of Dothraki and Valyrian.

The use of non-English languages in *Game of Thrones* is meant to represent an obsession with power, even if not explicitly said. Daenerys has no choice but to learn other languages in order to survive, and she uses them they are used to her advantage throughout the series. In past episodes of *Game of Thrones*, Daenerys was seen as a savior, freeing slaves and defeating tyrants to help the unfortunate; however, her cruel actions and Valyrian words in “The Iron Throne” leave viewers unable to sympathize with her, but instead with Tyrion and Jon, who only speak the Common Tongue. It may be because the two feel excluded for not knowing her language, as viewers feel as well. Multilingual scholar L. K. Kirambain, in *Language and Education*, says that “symbolic power

entails that those who speak non-standard languages can be (or simply are) effectively excluded” (Kiramba, 2018, p. 8). In the case of Valyrian or Dothraki, this idea is reversed because, although subtitles are included, Daenerys speaking a language to express her victory—won by fire and blood spilt of innocent civilians—insinuates that her language is now the dominant language. It leaves the viewers feeling excluded and almost betrayed by their beloved character. Daenerys has the advantage of being multilingual and switching languages with different people in order to reach her goal of being queen through fear and power. Doing this, she has the ability of linguistic manipulation that characters and viewers do not even realize she has until she has used it against them.

Lexical choice in *Game of Thrones* speaks truly to how language use can negatively affect people in the real world. The sounds and significant other-language words in both Valyrian and Dothraki connote violence, destruction, and death. Word choices that use “blood” as a prefix and suffix emphasize the violence and fear connoted in the language choices. A viewer will understand that if a person is not a “bloodrider” of Daenerys, they may as well be useless to her because of the implication that they would sacrifice their own “blood” for her.

Mental and physical violence in these worlds are connected through language because of their capability to manipulate others. As an adult series, the *Game of Thrones* television show can show the significance of learning different languages, but the show does demonstrate the fear of “other languages” that multilinguals often experience: language often separates, excludes us from each other.

## Conclusion

*Game of Thrones* illustrates only two of the many fictional languages invented by writers, but its languages demonstrate the relationships its speakers have with the world in which they live. The languages, more importantly, have an effect on how the audience perceives that

world. Through Daenerys' use of Valyrian and Dothraki, an obvious obsession with power through language is demonstrated. She is able to manipulatively create fear in the vulnerable hearts and minds of the monolingualists. Through these creations, Martin is able to display hatred and an obsession with power through linguistic structures that imitate and emulate violence in his stories.

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***THE DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE OF DUALITY OVERVIEW:  
QUESTIONS OF VALUE, TRANSFORMATION,  
MENTAL ILLNESS, AND ORIGIN***

*by Sarah Lyons*

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**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Annual Conference of Duality  
30 November 2020**

**Conference Summary:**

Enclosed in this document are excerpts from The Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Annual Conference of Duality, addressing various topics surrounding Robert Louis Stevenson's original *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and modern adaptations—specifically emphasizing the questions and perspectives around origin, transformation, and duality. The roundtable was incredibly fortunate to have speakers related intimately to or within the text, including Stevenson, Jekyll, Utterson, and Lanyon. Speakers were encouraged to validate their claims through scholarly research, illustrations, discussion, textual evidence, first-person perspective, author

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purpose, poetry, and other categories. The intention of this conference was not to pinpoint a solution to every question but to respect the contrasting points of view surrounding this character and the controversial ideas that accompany him.

**Topics:**

We, therefore, welcomed research and experience addressing topics including but not limited to:

- Value of the novel
- Physical transformations
- Character persona
- Duality of humans
- Education and duality
- Mental illness
- Drugs and duality
- Primitive nature
- Visual/audio expertise
- Origin of Jekyll and Hyde

**Conference Coordinator Expanded Statement:**

As many scholars know, the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde character is incredibly open-ended. There is much room for the reader to interpret their own reasoning and understanding behind his character. This conference welcomed various perspectives and insights around the way in which Stevenson's novel has inspired thought on and beyond dual characterization. While many scholars looked directly at the text, others were encouraged to pull from adaptations and research when responding to the topics. As duality in concept is embedded into the world, culture, point of view, and identity, this conference provided a take on diverse thinking around consistent topics in everyone's day-to-day life. We thank all

contributors for your submissions and research, and we deeply enjoyed the discussion in late November.

**Speaker:**                      **Statement:**

Moderator                      On behalf of WildStorm, the leading American comic book imprint, we would like to thank you—scholars, writers, and characters—for attending this Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Annual Conference here at the University of Edinburgh!

We've gathered people from all over the world (including the infamous character himself) to chat with us today!

Let's get started. What do you believe are the origins or roots of the Jekyll/Hyde dual character?

**What do you believe are the origins or roots of the Jekyll/Hyde dual character?**

Margot Livesey (Stevenson specialist)                      Oh, this question is easy! “Stevenson has known about Deacon Brodie, the eighteenth-century Edinburgh cabinetmaker on whom he based Jekyll and Hyde, since childhood” (Livesey 145). His character was built on a real individual who struggled with understanding the self.

Barbara  
D'Amato  
(Freudian  
expert)

Let me make this clear: Jekyll and Hyde didn't originate from some random cabinetmaker. Stevenson "was inspired by an extraordinary dream" (D'Amato 93). He wrote the book right after he "consulted a physician who prescribed a 'draught' that cured him of the dream and its maddening ruminations" (D'Amato 97). The creation of the Jekyll and Hyde character was built entirely on the incredibly rare occurrences of a dream.

Anne Stiles  
(Split Brain  
expert)

No, no. I believe "Stevenson was probably influenced by French physician Ernest Mesnet's case study of a soldier (Sergeant F.) who developed two distinct personalities after his left cerebral hemisphere was damaged by a gunshot wound" (Stiles 880). I believe that this says something much more complex about our reality. The real world—the nonfiction world—may appear so fictional and unrealistic that it is hard to establish the truth behind a story. Stevenson's novel gives us direct insight into real human experience.

Barbara  
D'Amato

Stevenson is more connected to Freud, I believe, than these other scholars are suggesting. This novel "anticipated Freud's yet-to-be published theory of an unconscious that lies buried beneath" (D'Amato 98). Freud believes humans have impulses to be ugly and narcissistic, with desires for revenge and murder (D'Amato 98). In this case, Stevenson



was influenced either by another man or by his own mind.

Mr. Utterson  
(character)

One night, I had a dream of a “figure in two phases[, one of which] behold[s] the features of the real Mr. Hyde...who was without bowels of mercy...[and] a spirit of enduring hatred” (Stevenson 15). If D’Amato were correct, this demonstrates the internal battle Jekyll must be fighting within his own unconscious (D’Amato).

Dr. Henry  
Jekyll  
(character)

D’ Amato’s commentary does align with my perception of Mr. Hyde within myself. “When I would come back from these excursions, I was often plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity. This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centered on self; drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another” (Stevenson 53). If Hyde were controllable and manageable, I don’t believe Stevenson would have a story to tell about me.

Robert Louis  
Stevenson  
(writer/author)

Jekyll and Hyde may perhaps be a reflection of my own interpretation of reality and humankind itself: “I cannot get used to this world—The prim obliterated polite face of life, and the broad or bawdy” (Livesey 141).

Robin Peel (education specialist) I believe this is the larger theme surrounding duality and its importance and relevance to readers. I may be biased, but “one of the most crucial judgements here concerns what we wish to produce and retain within the framing of schooling. We have said that, as educators, we must be willing to live with contradictions, but this is not to by-pass reason and clarity of thought” (Peel 11).

Moderator Could you possibly expand on this more, Mr. Peel? How does duality pertain to teaching and education, specifically?

### **How does duality pertain to teaching and education?**

Robin Peel Certainly. “It is in those moments of breaching, when groups of children, students or teachers, suddenly leap out of their element and see that the world that was so familiar suddenly looks startlingly different” (Peel 13).

Robert Louis Stevenson Duality does extend beyond the internal self. We live in a world of duality just as much as we live in a dual mind.

Robin Peel Exactly! “We must create new ways of speaking about [and with] schools in this post-Jekyll and Hyde world” (Peel 14).

Moderator Thank you all for your insights. It is critical to expose students to the ambivalent themes embedded in our culture and our lives, and it seems that discussing both education and the value of truth through origin does just that. We are now going to continue on to your next questions: what other expanding texts have mimicked or depicted this character, and what makes your text valuable in this discussion?

**What are other expanding texts that mimic or depict this character, and what makes this text valuable in this discussion?**

Dara Weir I have a brief poem:

When you live alone with no one else  
 what's left to do but fight with yourself?  
 .....  
 The garden's tilled and sown and mulched.  
 .....  
 The stone lions that guard your gate  
 practically lay down with the lambs. (Weir)

And this may not be as intricate or long as Moore's graphic novel, but I do focus on the deepest mental challenges of Henry Jekyll. His story is a battle of self. He must sit in his own emotional isolation and recognize the creature deep within, as we all must. None of us is battling the external lion of life—but instead the internal one.

Dr. Henry  
Jekyll

Indeed, this Hyde lion of sorts has consumed me. “I could have screamed aloud; I sought with tears and prayers to smother down the crowd of hideous images and sounds with which my memory swarmed against me; and still, between the petitions, the ugly face of my iniquity stared into my soul” (Stevenson 57).

Beverly J. Bell  
(musical  
executive  
producer)

I’m not a poet, but I am hosting the most wonderful musical called *Jekyll and Hyde* at the Maguire Theater at Old Westbury (Jacobson 11). I believe this interpretation is relevant because of how it will elevate the theatricality already embedded into the story! We’ve got ticket sales going through the roof for the “Jekkies” fans from all over the country (Jacobson 11).

Robert Louis  
Stevenson

It’s flattering to know I’ve created a consistent fan base.

Alan Moore  
(graphic novel  
writer and  
illustrator)

I have produced a graphic novel with this character. I believe it depicts the emotional and situational complications that Dr. Jekyll deals with regularly. It puts him in a modernized world with various characters who sympathize with his hardships. Hyde is illustrated as a larger creature with a tanned skin tone and sharp teeth. I am unsure if this contradicts Stevenson’s piece.

- Robert Louis Stevenson      You made him larger? Hm. “Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness” (Stevenson 17). You did at least include the substances, did you not?
- Alan Moore      The drugs? No, I did not. I don’t feel that this is a relevant component to the internal battle he is facing. His issues in my graphic novel surround mental illness more so than drug use. Although it may have played an initial part in his destruction, by the time he appears in my story, his battle has separated itself from drugs and is wholly on him.
- Dr. Lanyon (character)      With respect, Mr. Moore, I disagree with your removal of the substances. I have personally experienced its vivid connection to Dr. Henry Jekyll’s story: “when I opened one of the wrappers, I found what seemed to be a simple, crystalline salt of a white colour. The phial, to which I next turned my attention, might have been about half-full of blood-red liquor, which was highly pungent to the sense of smell and seemed to me to contain phosphorus and some volatile ether” (Stevenson 43).
- Moderator      This is a good point to discuss the physical transformations of these texts. How do your

illustrations replicate the physical transformation and persona associated with duality?

**How do illustrations replicate the physical transformation and persona associate with duality?**

- Alan Moore      In my images, the readers get to see a physical transformation in his face and body. He transitions through a crumpled, struggling, desperate, and painful expression. You can see his intense attempt to contain himself and not let Hyde win. It's not the easiest moment to experience, truthfully.
- Robert Louis Stevenson      Dr. Henry Jekyll does experience pain in his transformations: "He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; and as I looked there came, I thought, a change— he seemed to swell— his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter" (Stevenson 47). Pain is required in this transformation. Mr. Jekyll's inability to control, monitor, or regulate himself must be painful. We all crave the ability to have self-control within our own lives. If Jekyll didn't struggle in the transition, he would appear less human to me.

- Andrzej Klimowski (illustrator) My images do not depict the process of reasoning behind his transitions. While Stevenson focuses on the substances and Moore focuses on the physical body, I focus on the spiritual adjustments. In many of my illustrations, you see the rational and logical Henry Jekyll literally leave the body. This leaves him as a more demonic, soulless, and primitive character. Without the stability of morality and reasoning within us, who or what are we really?
- Dr. Henry Jekyll I wish your binary interpretation were true, Andrzej. “If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of [my] more upright twin” (Stevenson 49). Had I not consumed that vile liquid, perhaps I would not be a changed man.
- Moderator Let’s take a moment to ask the audience if they have any questions for the panel.
- Audience Member 1 The audience would like to know what adaptations, in film or graphic novels, you prefer?

**What adaptations in film or graphic novels are preferable?**

- Alan Moore      I am a bit biased, but I think many readers would enjoy my graphic novel. Jekyll and Hyde interact with new characters here, too—Miss Murray, the divorced singing teacher; Quartermain, the Middle Eastern drug dealer; Nemo, the mysterious pirate; and Griffin, the invisible man. It's also not long, so you won't get overwhelmed.
- Beverly J. Bell      I'll tell you what! At the end of this conference, any audience member can join a raffle to win free tickets to my upcoming musical!
- Barbara D'Amato      Personally, I embraced Fredric March's 1932 film *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. I feel that they put a comedic and animated spin on showing the animalistic transformation of Hyde.
- Andrzej Klimowski      I don't have a preference, but there are many versions of this character. You could spend days watching films about him. There seriously are dozens.
- Audience Member 2      Is there a single illustration that stands out to you in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*?



**Which illustration stands out to you in the graphic novel?**

- Robert Louis Stevenson      I enjoyed the scene where Dr. Jekyll is trying to hold back Mr. Hyde in that room filled with people. I truly wish my Dr. Jekyll could've been as strong as Moore's. However, I do not believe duality is fairly balanced.
- Moderator      Could you possibly elaborate on that?
- Robert Louis Stevenson      Well, Moore's Dr. Jekyll is able to contain himself. When overhearing a conversation, he gradually turns into Mr. Hyde. He develops his fangs, and his expression becomes monstrous (32), but he concludes the scene with composure and domination over his other half. Dr. Jekyll also has more self-awareness earlier in the text, noting, "well, for my part, I'm prepared to help the cause as much as possible. It's just that...well, sometimes I am not myself. I'm not sure I can always be relied on" (26). His Hyde was also very impressive.
- Alan Moore      It was fun to develop the moments where Jekyll lost full control. It felt so creative to develop his facial expressions, muscle tension, and anger. Creating such a powerful, aggressive monster was a very intimidating and rewarding task. One prominent example I am thinking of is when he is drooling, cursing, and bleeding from his nose (13). I really

wanted to build on representing rage in a visual way.

Moderator      Dr. Henry Jekyll, before we conclude this meeting, do you have any final remarks about what it is like to be a dual character—or perhaps, what your opinion is of Mr. Hyde?

Dr. Henry Jekyll      “I swear to God I will never set eyes on [Hyde] again. I bind my honour to you that I am done with him in the world” (Stevenson 25). So many of you will never understand the internal turmoil I must address.

Moderator      And with that dramatic ending, it seems our conference is coming to a close.

Let’s take a moment to reiterate some takeaways from this conference. The dual character may have originated from a soldier, a cabinet maker, or Stevenson himself. There is, respectfully, debate about the influence of drugs and mental illness on the character. Adaptations over time have changed Hyde from a small, dwarf-like character into a large and monstrous one. There are many poems, plays, songs, films, and illustrations that depict Jekyll/Hyde in different ways, and some scholars believe it is critical to teach the future generations about this character that battles duality.

Thank you again to all the scholars, illustrators, writers, and characters who contributed to our discussion, and we look forward to seeing you again in the upcoming year.

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## ABSORBING THE BLOWS: EMBODIED RACISM IN ERNEST GAINES'S *A LESSON BEFORE DYING*

by *Abigail Raley*

Nonverbal communication is the basis of human interaction. Language, obviously, is important, but nonverbal communication is how people can tell that comments like, “I just love how you wear anything,” beneath their complimentary shellac, are far from flattery. Human beings are deeply rooted in the body, as is seen through artistic forms like dance and theatre, and depending on factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual orientation, the connection to an existence in the body will be different. One’s background is such a heavy determinant of the body because one’s existence in a cultural context determines how a person will be treated, thus how they are conditioned to behave. In her opening essay to *What Makes A Man*, Rebecca Walker discusses her son coming home from school, closed off and guard up, saying, “I could feel a shift as he began to remember, deep in his body, that he was home, that he was safe” (1). Walker notes how her son was guarded and closed off, later expounding in her essay that his experiences as a boy in the sixth grade created an internalized language, a preparation “for war” (4).

Gender, though, is not the only predisposition that influences the movement of the body. Race, another point of cultural positioning, affects the way all of us (though especially people of color) carry our bodies. The Black body has been the epicenter of

brutalization, profiteering, and oppression for centuries. American capitalistic culture has posited Black bodies as a source of profit and abuse, inciting inherited wealth disparity and generational trauma among Black communities. If body language can be learned, interpreted, and passed down, then the body language that accompanies centuries of oppression must be inherent in Black bodies.

Ta-Nehisi Coates in “Letter to My Son” notes the ways in which racism lives and manifests in the Black body stating “racism is a visceral experience...it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth.” Coates is clearly alluding to the brutality committed against the Black body by American society at large. However, Coates also means that violence committed against Black people is internalized in the body. Internalization happens intersectionally as well, as “Black women executives are hampered by being treated as mummies and being penalized if they do not appear warm and nurturing” (Collins 267). Societal pressures to be more accommodating, to work oneself into the “mammy” stereotype of the nurturing Black woman or else be penalized, attempt to condition Black women to only operate under the pretense of that stereotype. Intersectional issues between race and gender affect how Black men and women differently experience racism, and Ernest Gaines’s *A Lesson Before Dying* examines the delicate interplay between race and gender, the same interplay that influences Walker’s son’s own personal middle school “war.”

*A Lesson Before Dying* is a novel full to the brim of racial oppression, the social hierarchy of the Jim Crow South setting the precedent for who may behave in what way and to what extent. Not only do the characters of *A Lesson Before Dying* grapple with an onslaught of oppression, microaggressions, and unspoken societal precepts, they also live with how those concepts are quantified based on colorism, status, and gender. The novel chronicles the lives of two Black men, Grant and Jefferson, as they each navigate their own

social position within the Jim Crow South. While Grant is a school teacher on a local plantation, Jefferson has been jailed—and is facing execution—for a crime he did not commit. It is Grant's job to convince Jefferson that he is worthy of life and humanity. Jefferson's main struggles are how he, in fact, handles his own internalization that he is a hog instead of a man, begging the question of what it means to be a man—much less a Black man in a violently racist society. Gaines struggles with the numerous aspects of what makes people human and utilizes an articulate and informed narrator, Grant, as a means to help the audience analyze what makes up the most banal parts of how we interact with each other. While *A Lesson Before Dying* depicts the many ways in which Black people may act in the defiance of white aggression, Gaines's use of body language, social cues, and the treatment of Black bodies under white hands all show how the body is physically burdened and manipulated by contemporary racism.

Grant's own adaptations to his racist environment are most apparent when in the presence of Henri Pichot. The first time the reader sees Grant interact with Pichot, he is obedient to the societal standard that has been set. Grant says, "He was finished talking to me. Now he wanted me to look away. I lowered my eyes" (Gaines 21). While Grant is an observant narrator, the way in which he notes this experience is not because of his intelligence, but rather the habit and internalization of what is expected of a Black man talking to a white, affluent man. Phillip Auger notes that "Gaines emphasizes the complete imprisoning function of white discourse by the many 'structures' he selects for the voice(s) of white patriarchy" (77). Pichot is one of the largest structures that Gaines selects. Patriarchy sets a precedent for the interplay between masculinity, and signs of lowering eyes and submission are important to the exertion of dominance that is inherent in a racially based patriarchy.

Grant's initial conversation with Henri shows the control that Pichot has over the discourse in the microscopic ways he acts toward

Grant and Miss Emma and the ways that Grant responds to those actions. Racism is performed physically in every scene where Pichot is present, or maybe Grant, as narrator, wants to point out Pichot's aggressions. By placing Grant's first interactions with Pichot so close to the beginning of the story, Gaines is establishing the law of white supremacy. Performative racism is established in these opening scenes, which allows the reader context for the way that Jefferson acts later.

The next big Pichot scene, however, goes differently. Grant questions at the beginning of this scene whether "I should act like the teacher that I was, or like the nigger that I was supposed to be" (Gaines 47). In Grant's question of which way he should act around the white men, Gaines draws a parallel between Jefferson's grappling with manhood and Grant's struggle with his. To be Black is to be an animal, and the opening courtroom scenes of the novel establish this. Just as Jefferson sits in his cell and calls himself a hog, Grant is internalizing the racism imposed upon him, actively choosing whether or not to act like the animal the white men expect him to be. The kind of racism historically imposed on Black men is based on the assumption that they are similar to wild animals, beasts, or cattle. Walker's son, much in the same way, is expected to show more aggressive traits, not only as a Black boy, but as a boy in general. While all men fall under pressure to perform aggression, Black men are especially anticipated to be aggressive and are feared because of the perception of aggression. This perceived aggression of Black men is one of many perceptions that have been handed down since the writing of Gaines's piece and have not been shaken from contemporary society. Along with perceived aggression, we see the assumption that Black men, because they are Black, cannot participate in "standardized language," an assumption that is used to reassert white supremacy.

On page 48 of *A Lesson Before Dying*, Sam Guidry anticipates Grant will improperly use "don't" rather than "doesn't" at one point

in the conversation so that he can feel superior to Grant. Of this, Grant notes, "I was being too smart" (Gaines 48). Guidry's interest in Grant's grammatical correctness is, as Auger says, one of the "structures designed to preserve white forms of power" (77). Because they anticipate Grant to be lesser than, they anticipate him to follow the patterns they have assumed those lesser than to follow. Racism is embodied here, not within Grant, but within Guidry and Pichot. They have also internalized the ways in which racism has affected the Black body, and they expect to be yielded to on the basis of those preconceptions. The use of standard versus nonstandard English is utilized as a point of power, so Grant's "correct" use of the word "doesn't" undermines Guidry's assumption of linguistic superiority. Defying Guidry's assumption of him is one manifestation of Grant's own perceptions of manhood, while his obedience at times also shows a maturity and understanding of their dynamic. The understood dynamic that Grant participates in is the basis for the performative nature of racism, and the performative obedience Grant supplies Guidry with melts in the face of Grant's disobedience to the norm.

The most shockingly overt of Gaines's symbols of ongoing embodiment of racism is when the superintendent visits Grant's school. Examinations such as this one were meant to keep the school running to a point of *production* rather than a point of general wellbeing and comfort, and the superintendent's visit is an amalgamation of shocking assertions of white supremacy and capitalism across a variety of fields. The superintendent first utilizes Guidry's method of linguistic superiority when he *refuses* to say Grant's name correctly. Gaines interjects this detail to remind and reemphasize to his audience who leads the discourse, here. Grant must yet again adapt his own body language and behavior to accommodate the superintendent, Dr. Joseph. Dr. Joseph does not need to know Grant's name because he is a subordinate, unimportant enough to even identify, much less know. Joseph's treatment of the children, though, is Gaines's most obvious move



toward the embodiment of racism in the novel. Grant says “he would have the poor children spreading out their lips as far as they could while he peered into their mouths” (Gaines 56).

Not only is Joseph’s ability to examine the children’s mouths revelatory of the internalized power dynamic between Black and white characters throughout Gaines’s novel, but it is also a literal commodification of the bodies of the children. American capitalism, as we know it today, is perpetuated by the invention of slavery, and Joseph’s examination of the children reintroduces the connection between Black bodies and profitability. Their health is only relevant to the superintendent because their bodies will be used to turn a profit and further the greater economic wellbeing of white people. Here, the internalization of racism is shown through physical practice and manipulation of the body. The internalization is not physically contained within the body but physically exerted upon the body. Black bodies are once again understood and commodified under the lens of white capitalism, yet another manipulation of the body via cultural understanding. At the same time, Jefferson’s body—a symbol for all imprisoned Black men—is being manipulated by the state. His literal physical imprisonment is parallel to the Black students in that he is being used for profiteering by the state and prison industrial complex.

Again, Gaines unspokenly brings his readers back to Jefferson’s understanding of his own body as that of a hog, of nothing, of a stupid animal. The superintendent treats the children as if they are livestock, unwilling to even provide better supplies for them as to not decrease profit margins. Gaines brings us back again and again to images of racism *within* the body, whether that be the performative racism that Grant is subjected to by Pichot and Guidry, Jefferson’s own understanding of his body as that of a hog, or the commodification of the children in Grant’s class. Gaines drives the narrative of *A Lesson Before Dying* with imagery of how racism is perpetuated; as Auger says, “these white men are so powerful not

simply because they are positioned [there]...their power is supported by discursive structures that they all, in return, uphold and reinforce” (77). Embodiment of racial aggression is one way in which white people throughout the story reassert their own power and supremacy, illuminating that ultimate power and ultimate oppression will always rest in the bones of the oppressed.

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*THE GENDER IDENTITY DEFINED BY A NAME IN  
SILENCE*

*by Joseph Shoulders*

The Old French poem *Silence* is a complex exploration of gender following a rare subject for the Middle Ages—a female hero. In this story, King Evan of England forbids women from receiving inheritance after two counts die fighting each other over which of their wives is the older twin and the heir to their father's lands. When Sir Cadour and his wife Euphemie's child is born female, Cadour decides the child will live as a man to receive their inheritance. The child, named Scilense, is raised in isolation to conceal their identity until they run away with minstrels and return to become King Evan's retainer. Queen Eupheme attempts to seduce Scilense, and after being rejected twice, she stages a rape to have Scilense banished to France. Once a war breaks out in England, King Evan has Scilense return to fight as a knight. Seeing their prowess, Queen Eupheme tries again to seduce Scilense and is once again rejected. Enraged, she commands King Evan to send Scilense to find Merlin, who upon arriving at court reveals Scilense to be female. Scilense is then forced to live as a woman as King Evan's new wife.

In between the scenes of action, the personified Nature and Nurture argue over how Scilense should live—as female or male. This poem thus poses the question, “Is gender decided by Nature or Nurture?” This question still perplexes today's society. In posing this question, the poet could seem progressive, but the narrator

frequently adds misogynistic comments on women and ultimately sides with Nature—specifically, biological sex. However, the narrator’s stance is challenged by the development of the poem’s narrative, since Scilense lives successfully and happily as a man. A notable defense of Nurture occurs in lines 2063-2085 as Cador describes how he shall name his child before the baptism. The passage indicates that Scilense’s complex gender identity is created through their christening, an act of social assignment. This social assignment of gender demonstrates how *Silence* ultimately presents gender as an act of Nurture.

The first aspect of Scilense’s naming that creates their identity is the grammatical markers of gender. The hero is given three names: Scilense, Scilenscius, and Scilencia. The narrator generally refers to them as Scilense. The hero is christened as Scilenscius, and they will be called Scilencia when outed as female.<sup>1</sup> In Old French, “Scilense” is a masculine noun, but the poet uses the Latin suffixes marking gender for “Scilenscius” and “Scilencia.” This use differentiates “Scilense” from the male name, indicating that the name Scilense is meant to be interpreted as gender-neutral. Since this is the name the narrator uses for the hero, the narrator does not present Scilense as fully female despite their sex.

The meaning of the name Scilense also counteracts the hero’s nature. The name means “silence”—a word that the poem uses against women. Notably, a plea from Cador echoes a misogynistic statement by King Evan. For Scilense to receive their inheritance, Cador prays, “May Jesus Christ through his power / keep her hidden and silent for us” (2070-2071). Later in the poem, Queen Eupheme insults Merlin in court after he accuses her of falsifying the rape. Annoyed by the queen’s interruption, King Evan advises her:

A woman’s role is to keep silent.

.....

---

<sup>1</sup> Following the narrator’s usage, I will refer to the hero as Scilense unless differentiating between their gendered roles.

and it's hardly a coincidence  
 that there isn't one in a thousand  
 who wouldn't earn more praise by keeping silent  
 than by speaking. ... (6398, 6403-6406)

King Evan claims women will be rewarded by their silence. In this regard, a female hero named “silence” being rewarded with inheritance and a king for a husband seems apt. However, Scilense is not a silent character. Scilenscius befriends many people as a beloved minstrel and knight, and the narrator gives Scilense several inner dialogues. The character’s words are not silenced until they are outed as female and renamed Scilencia. Scilencia has no dialogue, and the narrator does not reveal if they desire to marry King Evan or not. Thus, Scilense does not represent their name until they become a woman. This demonstrates that when Cadon wishes his child to be silenced, he refers to the womanhood of the child. Based on the stereotype in the poem’s culture that women talk too much, the name Scilense metaphorically disassembles the hero’s womanhood.

In conjunction with the hero’s names, the poem uses pronouns, creations of Nurture, to socially denote Scilense’s gender. After Scilense is born, Cadon declares their name—“He will be called Silentius” (2074)—but if Scilense is revealed as female, “She’ll be called Silentia” (2078). Depending on the name presented, Cadon uses different pronouns that correspond with their gender markers. Line 2074, which refers to Scilense with he/him pronouns, uses a passive voice, meaning Cadon does not clarify who will call his child Scilenscius. In contrast, Cadon uses an active voice in a previous line when he says, “We shall call her Silence” (2067). This could be a declaration of the child’s neutral name, or this line could mean that the “we”—Cadon, Euphemie, and the countess present—would call them Scilense. With the latter interpretation, the unsaid subject of line 2074 would be everyone who does not know of Scilense’s sex. Thus, using names and pronouns, acts of Nurture, Scilense is male

to the public. Only if people learn of Scilense's nature does Cador refer to them with she/her pronouns.

Since Scilense must present as male, they are christened as Scilenscius. The baptism officiates this prescription of Scilense's gender. A person's name is a representation of themselves, including their gender, which can be explicitly indicated by suffixes, as is the case with Scilenscius. In the setting of *Silence*, baptisms are when people are officially christened by a priest. In this light, baptism becomes a holy sanctioning of an identity defined by a name. The passage upholds the importance of Scilense's baptism when Cador states, "For if we are lucky with the baptism, / we will be in a much stronger position" (2065-2066). The position Cador refers to is presenting Scilense as a son, and he asserts that the baptism is crucial for this. By upholding the baptism as an officiation of gender, Cador regards an act of Nurture as more important than Nature in creating Scilense's identity.

Cador's language throughout this passage indicates Cador's indifference to Nature. An example of such language is in lines 2079-2082 when he reflects on the suffixes of Scilense's names. Cador expresses:

If we deprive her of this -us,  
we'll be observing natural usage,  
for this -us is contrary to nature,  
but the other would be natural.

In these lines, there are no connotated words suggesting that to be natural is to be better. The only heavily connotated word is "deprive" (2079). This word choice is interesting since to deprive someone of something implies that they were owed it, and, according to Nature, the masculine -us suffix would not be owed to Scilense. The word echoes Scilense's situation: if they are deprived of a male name, they will be deprived of an inheritance they are owed. Scilense's female nature becomes an obstacle to them inheriting. Cador overcomes this by the male christening, which is an act of Nurture.

Despite the poem ending with restoring Scilense's nature, the narrator does not criticize Cador for giving Scilense a male name. Instead, Cador's plea to Christ and the successful baptism suggest his actions to be divinely approved. Moreover, before this passage, the narrator praises Cador's brave deeds and noble love. Through endorsing Cador, the narrator endorses the naming of Scilense, which establishes their identity grammatically, metaphorically, and socially. Therefore, this passage is an example of *Silence* validating the concept of gender identity as a decision of Nurture.

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# ARE WE AT WAR WITH COVID-19?

*by Caitlyn Woitena*

## **Introduction**

The world is all too familiar with warfare. The 20<sup>th</sup> century alone held two world wars whose effects are still discussed today. Considering this violent past, it is no surprise that war metaphors typically work their way into public discourse. Ironically, war metaphors are particularly common in the field of medicine. In a profession where the goal is to preserve life, it is rather odd that violent war metaphors are so prevalent. This seeming paradox may, indeed, cause us to question why war metaphors are so common when describing illnesses and what benefits and costs arise in using such language. Specifically, during an unprecedented world pandemic, we have seen this practice resurge. This paper strives to analyze President Donald Trump's rhetoric in his Coronavirus Taskforce press briefings. By linguistically analyzing President Trump's speeches during the COVID-19 pandemic, I uncover the war narrative he built.

## **Literature Review**

### *Metaphors*

Rhetorical devices are used to persuade or communicate meaning. One of the most common rhetorical devices is metaphor. Metaphors connect two seemingly different things to provide clarity and show similarities between the two. Scholars have deemed metaphors



useful because they provide context for difficult-to-understand topics (Lakoff & Johnson, 2002). The use of metaphor allows abstract information to be brought into the concrete; thus, metaphors are desirable forms of communication (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011).

### *War metaphors and politicians*

War metaphors are common in public discourse because the vast majority of the public understands the implications of warfare. From a young age, we are taught the perils of war. Ultimately, the commonality of these metaphors within the public sphere is widely accepted. However, over the past few decades, scholars have sought to analyze the use of metaphors within political discourse. Edelman (1971) explains, “Metaphor and myths are devices for simplifying... complex and bewildering sets of observations that evoke concern” (p. 65). Politicians use metaphors to break down complex situations for the general public. Mio (1997) furthers this thought, claiming metaphors make issues understandable and relevant. It is difficult to care about something for which you do not have any understanding. The utilization of metaphor allows politicians to bring hard-to-grasp issues into the public eye. War metaphors also give politicians the opportunity to frame a specific issue as something to “fight” against. For example, President Lyndon B. Johnson chose to champion the “War on Poverty” rather than just saying “poverty is a big issue that should be stopped” (Flusberg, Matlock, & Thibodeau, 2018). President Johnson realized that there is no actual way to wage a war against poverty. However, he understood that in order for the public to recognize it as a threatening issue, the cause would be better supported by the employment of such a metaphor.

There is also political gain through the use of war metaphors. Stone (1988) argues war metaphors can be used to justify political actions. Politicians understand that some of their legislation of policies may not be taken well. However, if they frame certain

actions as ways to win a war, the American populace may be more open to them. Ultimately, the politician makes a situation understandable to set up the introduction of what action they are going to take.

### *War metaphors and illness*

War metaphors are particularly prevalent within medicine. It is not uncommon to characterize illness as an enemy that can be overcome (Gilbertson et al., 2016). Some patients have claimed that war metaphors help them recover and visualize their illness as something to be fought (Martin, 1990). However, these metaphors may be doing more harm than good. It is hard to truly define a “victory” when discussing illness because a “win” is relative to the person. For example, characterizing cancer as a battle becomes difficult when an individual with cancer dies. Using the logic of the metaphor, that person would be deemed a “loser.” However, I would hope that no one who has died from an illness is deemed a “loser.” This is the problem that author and cancer survivor Susan Sontag (2002) has with war metaphors in medicine: they lead us to inappropriate parallels. When discussing war metaphors and the AIDS epidemic, Sontag (2002) offers this insight: “militarized metaphors over mobilize, over describe, and contribute to the excommunicating and stigmatizing of the ill” (2002, p. 182).

### *Militarization and nationalism*

As previously stated, war metaphors simulate the feelings of actual wartime. Essentially, these metaphors seek to militarize a group or population in order to fight against a common enemy. Interestingly, during militarization the “civilian is positioned as a crucial spectator to and supporter of military action” (Lutz, 2018). Therefore, when a country is militarized, the citizens are forced to support those protecting them. Militarization typically leads to nationalism, which is simply citizens’ identification with their country and support for

its interests and betterment over all else (Greenfeld, 2012). Meaning, war and war metaphors that lead to militarization of a nation’s people may also lead said people to overly support those they believe to be protecting them.

**Methods**

The data for this study comes from President Trump’s Coronavirus press briefings held between April 1, 2021, and April 30, 2021. The briefings were meant to inform American citizens of the state of the country during the pandemic. Transcripts of all press briefings were analyzed using corpus linguistics for any words pertaining to war or a fight against Coronavirus. Essentially, corpus linguistics is the study of language used in day-to-day life by one individual or a large collection of individuals. The data collected is then analyzed for commonalities. In this case, only the parts of the daily briefings where President Trump spoke were analyzed, not the speech of others who may also have contributed (e.g., Dr. Anthony Fauci). Varying conjugations of words such as “fight” and “fighting” were counted under a singular conjugation. Only war words describing or pertaining to the virus were counted.

Table 1: President Trump’s COVID-19 Response Press Conference: A 30-day Survey of War Metaphors and Language Use on the Coronavirus

DATE	WAR	BATTLE	FIGHT	ATTACK	DEFEAT	WIN	ENEMY
April 1	2	0	0	2	1	2	2
April 2	2	1	3	1	2	3	5
April 3	2	1	0	0	0	1	1
April 4	6	2	3	3	0	0	1
April 5	3	2	6	1	0	0	2
April 6	2	4	2	3	2	2	3
April 7	3	0	1	1	0	3	0

April 8	0	0	1	2	0	2	0
April 9	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
April 10	2	0	3	2	1	2	4
April 13	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
April 14	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
April 15	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
April 16	5	1	1	0	1	3	3
April 17	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
April 18	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
April 19	5	1	0	0	0	1	1
April 20	3	0	0	1	1	0	0
April 21	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
April 22	2	1	2	4	0	0	2
April 23	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
April 24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
April 27	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
April 30	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Propensity</b>	<b>WAR</b>	<b>BATTLE</b>	<b>FIGHT</b>	<b>ATTACK</b>	<b>DEFEAT</b>	<b>WIN</b>	<b>ENEMY</b>
	<u>48</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>42</u>

<b>Totals</b>	<b>War</b>	<b>Battle</b>	<b>Fight</b>	<b>Attack</b>	<b>Defeat</b>	<b>Win</b>	<b>Enemy</b>
	48	17	26	20	9	24	42

## Analysis and Implications

The narrative of the United States being at war with the Coronavirus is heavily pushed by President Trump. President Trump characterized the pandemic as a “war” approximately 48 times in the one-month-long span. Why would he choose to characterize this pandemic as a war rather than a public health crisis?

Coinciding with war metaphor theory, most individuals are familiar with the urgency associated with wartime measures. President Trump’s use of the metaphor implies that it is difficult for the general public to grasp the severity of a virus that no one has experience with. However, by characterizing it as something people

are familiar with, he is more likely to emphasize the impending danger associated with the virus.

Throughout the press briefings, President Trump referred to healthcare workers as “warriors,” “soldiers,” and “fighters.” For example, he stated, “Our warriors in this life and death battle are the incredible doctors and nurses and healthcare workers on the front line of the fight” (Trump, 2020). This characterization of healthcare workers as American soldiers creates public support for them. It begins the process of militarization. Essentially, the public will be more willing to make and wear masks, provide food, and help them throughout this pandemic if they are told that these individuals are the ones who are working around the clock to save them. This use of the spoken word paints a vivid picture relative to the wartime propaganda of World War II in which the public was rallied around a common cause and “enemy.” This imagery panders to America’s patriotic nature, and it unites our communities toward the common goal of supporting our nation’s healthcare workers and unifying a common defense against this “invading” virus. Unfortunately, this rhetoric also justifies the loss of some healthcare professionals. We, as a society, normalize the loss of our soldiers during war. Therefore, President Trump’s use of a war metaphor acquaints us with the idea that some of our “warriors” will be lost to this enemy.

President Trump incessantly refers to the Coronavirus as the “invisible enemy.” In fact, in just one month, he told Americans that Coronavirus was a “national enemy” approximately 42 times. When discussing the “invisible enemy,” he would state things such as “this invisible enemy is tough, and it’s smart, and it’s vicious” (Trump, 2020). The adjectives used are meant to provoke the audience’s emotions. The decision to describe the virus as smart and vicious was intentional and planned. President Trump understands the American people would not be likely to take the threat seriously if he were to simply describe it as a sickness. He is giving the public something to fear and, hopefully, work to fight against. By describing

the virus as an external adversary or “invisible enemy,” he lays the groundwork for a large, collective response that otherwise would grate against the fiercely individualistic American populace. This laying of groundwork goes back to what Stone (1988) explains: a means to justify political action. President Trump is using metaphor to set the American population up to accept his plan of action to combat the Coronavirus. By imbuing the virus with the characteristics of a formidable enemy, President Trump provides the necessary personification of a common enemy for the American populace to wage all-out war against. Without this personalization of the fight against this common enemy, the American people would be much less accepting of any national effort that infringed upon their civil liberties, such as mandatory stay-at-home orders or mandated mass economic shutdowns.

The virus is described not only as evil. President Trump takes it a step further and states, “[T]his is genius that we’re fighting, we’re fighting this hidden enemy, which is genius. Okay? It’s genius. The way it’s attacked so many countries at so many different angles” (Trump, 2020). He makes it seem as though the Coronavirus Taskforce is trying to “outsmart” the virus. President Trump characterizes the virus as though it has a strategy to bring down nations. This characterization, though, is problematic. It makes it seem as though the virus can be fought and conquered. However, it has been proven that there is no true “win” with illness (Gilbertson et al., 2016). Therefore, President Trump may be leading the American people to an unachievable goal. In fact, President Trump acknowledged this shortcoming, stating, “It is a war and I define victory when it’s gone and we opened successfully. We have a successful country again. Now, it can never be a total victory because too many people have died” (Trump, 2020). He knows “winning” against the virus is impossible. However, he continues to utilize this rhetoric in hopes that it will spur morale within the American populace.

Another shortcoming of the war metaphor is that it is not necessarily *globally* unifying at a time when the virus is affecting people of all nations. In order to eradicate such a virus, there must be global cooperation. President Trump telling solely the American people to come together may not evoke a “team player,” world-member mindset. In fact, it may cause more stigmatization and nationalist-centered, isolationist views than already present. A war metaphor tells a population “we must protect our home,” when, in reality, it needs to be “we must protect our world.” A virus knows no culture, race, or homeland. As long as the virus persists somewhere, people will continue to be infected.

### **Conclusion**

Despite being warned about the Coronavirus in mid-January, President Trump waited until mid-March to mobilize the American populace to “go to war” with the virus. One cannot help but wonder if the virus had been addressed in January, would we have had to wage war in the first place? It seems as though President Trump may have wanted to be a wartime president to help strengthen his campaign for the 2020 Presidential Election. Unfortunately, we may never know President Trump’s true intentions in downplaying the virus until the war metaphor seemed to be politically advantageous.

Discursive analysis of this data reveals how President Trump characterized the COVID-19 Pandemic as a war. In doing so, he rallied the American populace behind a singular cause: join with the protector for support against the Coronavirus. It is hard to determine whether the war narrative was the right one or employed at the right time. On one hand, he communicated the virus being a threat and motivated the general public to join him in the fight against Coronavirus. However, on the other hand, he may have stirred up more fear and stigma against others—in the country and outside of the country—than necessary. The panic buying that took place towards the beginning of the pandemic is a good example of

the fear caused by politicians and the media. We will never truly know what rhetoric would have been the most effective. Regardless, it is clear that war metaphors pervade political speeches and communication, especially when discussing a possible threat.

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## “GET THE TABLES”: A METATHEATRICAL ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING

by *Abigail Raley*

I remember the day my boyfriend sat me on the couch to watch a fight in which two men beat each other mercilessly with clubs wrapped in (real) barbed wire. The Dudley Boyz pioneered prop use in wrestling with their iconic catchphrase “get the tables,” written to insist that, in spite of the rule that no props were to be used in the ring, they would use wooden folding tables to throw or smash onto people. It was not until I was introduced to wrestling that I began to understand it, not for the fake fighting and the roaring crowds, but for the theatre and genuine art that it produces. While I have not been familiar with wrestling for most of my life, I have been involved with theatre from a very young age, leading into an academic career in which I find myself intensely fascinated with its production. In many ways, professional wrestling is closer to ballet than it is to basketball. There are costumes, props, and incredible athleticism involved in the performance and production of both media. Both utilize scripted movement to tell a story that is predicated on the ultimate confrontation between the protagonist and the antagonist.

So, then what is the difference between ballet and wrestling? What is the difference in how they are produced? The production of theatre is an accessible and easy-to-draw reference, but the production of *metatheatre*, which can be described as a play in which the audience is made aware of—and complicit in—the production,

is a more interesting and accurate comparison. Wrestling is, by nature, performative, and the audience's awareness of its performance is what creates its own metatheatricality. Wrestling utilizes the art of deep play to convey the art of fighting, an art which breaks the fourth wall by involving its audience in the construction of the fight. Theatre in the round and the exposed nature of the wrestling ring both produce a raw effect that allows performers to interact with the audience via a fourth wall break, which is to be expected of a metatheatric production.

I saw Joyce Carol Oates speak at a conference at the beginning of 2020—not on wrestling, but on boxing. Boxing and wrestling are far apart in their practice and performance. (The theatricality of wrestling speaks for itself.) I believe, however, that Oates's comments on boxing were much in the same spirit of wrestling. Oates noted that boxing and fighting are not the same. One may lead into the other, but the two are distinct (Oates). Oates argued that there is play in boxing, a deep play. The nature of boxing is still for sport, whereas fighting is something much more primal and dependent on instinct. In her iconic work, *On Boxing*, Oates says, "boxing' is the art, but 'fighting' is the passion" (186). The distinction between art and passion, while utilized in conjunction in both wrestling and boxing, is the determinant that makes both stages theatrical. Oates even underscores the purpose of narrative in boxing, identifying the plot of a fight as, "a tragedy in which no one dies, the fight lacking a classic knockout always seems unresolved, unfulfilled" (186). The essential need for resolve places the narrative structure of competitive "fighting" into the same structural arena as a theatrical production. Just as in a theatrical production, the two players in boxing must not only engage with but listen to the body language and action of their partner.

In Richard Wright's autobiography *Black Boy*, Wright recounts an instance in which his white boss and other white superiors attempted to goad him into fighting another black man. The two

men found out they were being pitted against each other, but decided to fool the white men and pretend to fight in order to get money. Wright recounts how their play fight quickly transforms into something much more sinister:

Harrison shot a blow to my nose. The fight was on, was against our will. I felt trapped and ashamed. I lashed out even harder, and the harder I fought the harder Harrison fought. Our plans and promises now meant nothing. We fought four hard rounds, stabbing, slugging, grunting, spitting, cursing, crying, bleeding. The shame and anger we felt for having allowed ourselves to be duped crept into our blows and blood ran into our eyes, half blinding us. (Wright 243)

They begin in jest, Wright notes, throwing light punches at one another, but once he catches the blow to the nose, their play unravels into a sick primordial instinct to *fight*. While often perceived as a brutal and bloody *fight*, professional wrestling is actually much more similar to Wright's intentions than one would think. A similar phenomenon happens in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. The opening chapter, "Battle Royale," depicts a scene in which a similar staged fight—insisted upon by white men—takes a turn, as the distinction between fight and performance is blurred. Ellison writes, "I whispered, 'Fake like I knocked you out, you can have the prize.' 'I'll break your behind,' he whispered hoarsely. 'For *them*?' 'For *me*, sonofabitch!'" (6-7). The difference between performing for an audience and for the self becomes relevant in this instance, providing that fighting is only happening in self-interest, not in the interest of the audience to the fight. However, deep play is instigated by the attention of an audience or monetary gain and typically follows the narrative structure that Oates introduces.

Wrestling is prewritten fake fighting. The nature of wrestling is purely contingent upon the interest of the audience. Wright sets out with the intention of engaging in this art of deep play, which is the

same type of performance that Oates finds in her observations of boxing. All these forms of fighting for sport engage in an art of movement, but wrestling is set apart with the added element of plot, costume, lighting, props, and character. While fighters have their own personal brands, there is not the white hat/black hat tradition that wrestling supposes, one that allows their audiences to cheer for the good guys and boo for the bad. As audience members, we must be careful to distinguish between fight and play; if we do that, the realization of wrestling as an art form is quick to reveal itself.

For me, the realization happened when I begrudgingly sat down to watch yet another match on the same grey woven couch in the upstairs loft, a prime wrestling-watching spot for its giant television and high-tech soundbar. The match clicked on; I watched as the wrestlers “Invisible Man” and “Invisible Stan” were introduced into the ring. I quickly realized that their names were fitting, as they were anything but real. The match I was watching had no props, no smashing, no sweat, no blood, no costumes, not even real people. It merely consisted of one referee flopping around in the middle of an empty ring and a roaring crowd pulsating at the visual and auditory signals that were telling them which “fighter” landed what blow and when. Eventually, Invisible Man and Invisible Stan fought their way onto the top of a balcony, and as their invisible bodies cascaded over the partition and into the ground floor crowd, audience members toppled over at the weight of the imaginary bodies.

So, then, where does this match fit into the world of Wright and Oates? How does the art of deep play happen when there are no physical fighters to engage in play? This is where the theatre of wrestling is transformed into metatheatre. Wrestling, by design, is at an intersection between theatre and sport. While both boxing and wrestling engage in deep play and the art of movement rather than instinctual fighting, wrestling is elevated beyond even that. Though we have established that all forms of sport fighting are beyond fighting for survival or emotion, wrestling is the only one of these

that can be pushed into the realm of literal theatre. If wrestling is art, then the Invisible Man–Invisible Stan match is Dadaistic in form, the basis of the anti-art movement. Posing two imaginary fighters in the ring not only elevates the level of performance but also makes the awareness that wrestling is a type of written and predetermined performance the obvious keystone in watching the match.

When discussing wrestling in terms of play (the way Oates and Wright do), we can easily pick through and decipher the meaning of movement as theatre and art. In examining what the fighters are doing, we can decipher an artisanal language unique to wrestling. The decoding of play establishes wrestling as theatre, but the decoding of audience participation reveals it as metatheatre. The anti-art movement posed the question, “what is art?” The match between Invisible Man and Invisible Stan does much of the same.

C.W.E. Bigsby, in an article on metatheatre, says, “with theatre the stage remains clearly in evidence and the audience recognises its own role in the events” (188). The “ring” of wrestling acts as a stage, resembling the practice of performing theatre in the round (a notoriously revealing type of theatre). The structure of the “ring” fulfills the evident stage that Bigsby requires in his definition of metatheatre. Bigsby’s audience can also be seen in wrestling crowds. Suspension of disbelief becomes a burden put on an audience that is already asked to accept that fights are prewritten storylines injected with caricatures of performers. The metatheatricality of a piece is not purely contingent upon the nature of how it is written or performed; it is also reliant on its audience. For a piece of theatre to be meta, it must be self-aware and self-reflective, and the intention of metatheatre is to draw attention to its own creation and level of production.

Turning back to Invisible Man and Invisible Stan, the crowd members are more than full participants in the creation of the fight. As the announcer claims that the two fighters have toppled into the audience, the crowd’s willing participation to fall to the floor as if

they had been hit by the brawling duo suggests more than meets the eye. For one, they are actively admitting that this “fight” is performative in nature. Here, the audience takes the role of performer into their own hands, actively participating in the performance that they are watching.

To say, however, that there are no active performers beyond the audience in this invisible brawl would be wholly incorrect and unfair. The announcer and the referee work in conjunction to clue the audience in to what is happening in the ring and between themselves, much as the actors in a play guide their audience to understand the performance they are attending. The referee and the announcer must communicate with each other to create the illusion of play, but the audience’s reactions to the opponents and their imagined moves are equally important for creating that illusion. Most notable is the instance in which the fighters “fell” into the crowd. Just as real performers jumping into the crowd blurs the line between performer and observer, participation in imagined circumstances blurs the line between audience and performer. The break in the suspension of disbelief is necessary for the fight to happen.

Typically, the goal of theatre is to create a world in which the audience is coerced to suspend their disbelief: what happens on the stage is inescapable, it is real. In metatheatre, the objective is the opposite. In order to be self-aware, the work must also be overtly performative. It is sometimes enough for a text on its own to be self-aware, but because of theatre’s intimate and personal setting, the audience must be active in the creation of metatheatre (as is reflected in Bigsby’s qualification). Relationships between performers and their audiences *must* be examined in order to understand how performance works. Just as a writer and a reader must collaborate to create a story, the performer and the audience must interact to create theatre. The mere fact that there are no fighters in the ring for the “invisible” match and wrestling is still being produced reaffirms that

the audience is the keystone in the creation of wrestling, not the performers.

It may be arguable that the audience is suspending their disbelief for the duo, but their active participation in the fight makes them culpable in its performance. These elements of metatheatre are obvious in many (non-invisible) matches. Turning back to the Dudley Boyz and their catchphrase “get the tables,” we see the use of props contributing to wrestling’s metatheatrical practices. The practice of utilizing props and costumes becomes integral to how wrestlers are viewed and to the storylines that are created. Bertolt Brecht wanted to make his audience aware of the performance. In order to do this, he would often have actors roam about the stage in costume before the performance and during the intermission, the idea being that this would remove the illusion of performance. Brecht is constantly reminding the viewer that they are not watching anything real, but rather a performance. The revealing nature and clear staging of wrestling produce the same effect. The fighters cannot hide anything from their audience, and the raw nature of production breaks the fourth wall.

The point of metatheatre has always been to hold a mirror to the human condition and to examine it through the lens of self-awareness. Operating under the assumption that wrestling is metatheatrical and perpetuated by the culture that surrounds it, one is forced to ask themselves the question of what that means for our values and what we desire in human interaction. From wrestling, we can learn a new type of performance and physical intimacy that is otherwise inaccessible to performance theorists and artists. Invisible or not, wrestling fans have proven themselves to be the ultimate creators of their art form, proving that it is not the audience’s willingness to suspend their disbelief that makes wrestling such an interesting amalgamation of sport and play—it is their willingness to accept the performance.



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# STANDARD VS. NONSTANDARD VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

*by Hanna Van Winkle*

Language is an elaborate form of communication that ranges from formality in the workplace to social slang used with close friends and family. Students are taught daily to use Standard English rules in order to sound smart and capable of upholding responsibility. They are taught what has been decided to be correct and are pushed to hide the nonstandard voice that comes naturally to them. Within the nation, the way people speak varies greatly depending upon the dialectal regions in which they live, in which they were born and raised, or in which they have spent a lot of time. Whether it be pronunciation, grammar, or word choice, every individual has their own unique way of using the avenue of language. By exploring these dialectal differences and the relationship between standard and nonstandard varieties of English, one can understand the influence of language within lives and how to confront linguistic prejudice.

The standard varieties of English were created by those with power and money, making the formal voice become the expectation. This concept is difficult to understand, especially as a young student, making it more efficient to teach the idea of formal and informal voice until students are old enough to comprehend the standard creation. In “Whose Standard? Teaching Standard English,” Linda Christensen uses the example of when her teacher criticized her pronunciation of the word “lawyer” (2007, p. 142). This incident

completely framed the way she thought about her own language, causing her to care more about how she sounded than about what she was saying. It influenced her own teaching as she realized the impact of dialectal discrimination on someone's self-confidence. She changed her mentality to that of explaining the idea of standard rules to her students and teaching them the context in which they should be used. Although she did this, she also encouraged her students to use their unique voices, as those voices are a part of their identity.

When one understands why there is a standard and who created it, one can see that it is not the most important part of language. Christensen says, "It took me years...to discover that what I said was more important than how I said it" (2007, p. 145). This idea is supported by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) that proposes students have the right to speak their own dialects and languages (*Resolution on the Students' Right to Their Own Language*). For example, correcting a child using the term "y'all" in some contexts discourages them from being a part of their culture. The impact of correcting language use is long-lasting, but embracing the idea that everyone speaks differently allows for positive impact to come from the nonstandard varieties of language instead of negative.

Linguistic discrimination also stems from the idea that one dialect is better than another. The article "Myth Education: Rationale and Strategies for Teaching Against Linguistic Prejudice" describes the avenue of this socially accepted form of prejudice, in which people judge the livelihoods of others based on how they talk. People assume that those in the lower class speak in nonstandard varieties, while the wealthy have a standard voice. In order to combat prejudice, the dispelling of myths within dialects and nonstandard varieties of English is argued to be the solution. The most common myth mentioned in the article is that standard English is better than other varieties (Zuidema, 2005, p. 671). This myth instills the belief that any form of English that is not standard is not good enough to

be used, when, in reality, nonstandard usage is better used in some contexts than the standard.

It is important to teach students at a young age how to discern between the context of formality and nonstandard varieties. As the text points out, students also need to experience nonstandard varieties of language from the teacher, not just to be told that it can be used (Zuidema, 2005, p. 672). Allowing common cultural errors, like ending a sentence with a preposition, in social talk or informal settings teaches students when these rules should actually be applied. Teachers have the responsibility to “assist all students in the development of their ability to speak and write better whatever their dialects,” as stated by the NCTE. By eliminating linguistic myths and providing classroom instruction on these topics, as well as experiences regarding them, the prejudice can be decreased or completely removed.

Due to the stigma associated with language variations, many people’s lives have been affected within their career and social settings. The goal of the article “What’s up with that white voice?: The Tricky Art of Linguistic Code-Switching” is to reveal the issues of linguistic discrimination that lead to code-switching, a process used when a person feels the need to change their voice depending on the context (Rao, 2018). This could mean using a more standard dialect during a job interview to seem like a more competitive candidate or to seem more intelligent.

A survey was conducted in which sociolinguist and current Washington University in St. Louis professor John Baugh called multiple landlords regarding a lease and spoke in three different dialects: Mexican-American, African-American, and Standard American. The results from the experiment showed that the landlords were less interested in scheduling meetings with the callers speaking in the dialects of African-American and Mexican-American (Rao, 2018). This proves that many people are significantly focusing on the voice and creating conclusions about a person based

on this alone. Standard and nonstandard forms of English both have their time and place, yet without education about that, the usage of the wrong variety can negatively influence someone's life.

The most important thing an educator can do is to show their students that their languages are important, as they hold meaning within their cultures and personal identities (Christensen, 2007, p. 143). This is done directly within the classroom, especially Language Arts or English-focused courses. Teachers should feature lessons in their curriculum based on why standard language was created and by whom, showing that power and wealth had the greatest influence, not knowledge. Teaching students at an early age and integrating linguistic research by the students themselves allows them to gain a first-hand perspective on the problems around them in order to combat dialectal prejudice (Zuidema, p. 669). It is most important that students can share their voice with those around them and that their teachers respect students' language diversity (*Resolution on the Students' Right to Their Own Language*). Choosing to use standard language is up to the individuals themselves, but when it is made into an expectation in daily discussion and the Language Arts classroom, students are discouraged from being who they are. By implementing these ideas in the educational setting from the beginning, the impact of standard and nonstandard varieties can become positive, and linguistic discrimination can decrease.

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