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**Student-teacher conferencing: Showing the pigeons in the
magician's sleeves**

Coleman, RoseAnne, D.A.

Middle Tennessee State University, 1992

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**Student-Teacher Conferencing: Showing the Pigeons
in the Magician's Sleeves**

RoseAnne Coleman

**A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts
August, 1992**

**Student-Teacher Conferencing: Showing the Pigeons
in the Magician's Sleeves**

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Abstract

Student-Teacher Conferencing:

Showing the Pigeons

in the

Magician's Sleeves

by RoseAnne Coleman

Many composition instructors are frustrated because there is such a lack in comprehensive improvement in the writings of their students. Knoblauch and Brannon state that teachers must first realize many classroom problems stem from a lack of a conscious philosophical base in the instructors' own teaching processes. Coleman gives a brief history of rhetoric, focusing especially on nineteenth-century tenets, showing how they still are being adhered to today, and encourages the adoption of a modern philosophical rhetorical view that places the student as the classroom's focus. She maintains that one method that focuses on the student is one-to-one conferencing between student and teacher, and cites numerous proponents of conferencing such as Donald Murray, Janet Emig, Roger Garrison, and Muriel Harris, who have spent their academic lives writing about this system and how they believe it allows the best

RoseAnne Coleman

environment for students to improve as writers. Coleman describes a conferencing experiment she tried with a freshman composition class and gives positive statistical results of that experiment. She gives the models and schedules used to set up the program. Coleman encourages all composition instructors to evaluate their pedagogical philosophic base to determine if the nineteenth-century's focus on form is their model, and if so, to construct a modern rhetorical view that focuses on the individual needs of the students, which she proposes are best served by the conferencing method.

Chapter I

Introduction

I came to the the one-to-one approach of teaching composition rather desperate. That might sound exaggerated to some, but it was the sad truth. I graduated with an undergraduate degree in English with a teaching certificate; however, I was never taught how to teach writing. I do not remember being taught how to teach grammar, either, for that matter, and when I encountered a class of forty seventh graders, I was unprepared and terrified. I am fortunate to have been born into a family with several generations of teachers, so I received valuable advice from my mother, getting me through that first year of teaching.

After realizing my dearth of training, I embarked on a search to find a viable method of teaching composition, a search that lasted through eight years of teaching high school English, through a Master's degree in English, and through one year of my doctoral degree--until I encountered a class in teaching college English taught by Dr. Larry Mapp, in which he introduced Janet Emig's "Writing as a Mode of Learning," Donald Murray's "The Listening Eye: Reflections on the Writing Conference," and Muriel Harris' Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference. As I read these authors and observed Dr. Mapp's own conferencing techniques, I leapt for joy, literally, because here was a

method that actually made sense, that worked, that said things about the writing process that I had always thought were true: that writing is a process, that grading every essay is unproductive to the student's writing process, that comments on a page are not as effective as a conversation with a student, that I could learn as much about writing as the student could because of this discursive process.

However, in the past when I had assigned compositions, I was always uneasy that the students were only writing what they thought I wanted, and my grading focused too much on form, almost ignoring content. And I always sensed that my marginal comments on students' papers never really reached the heart of their writing process, that I was just a little too late to help, like a physician arriving on the accident scene after the fatality had occurred. However, conferencing seemed to have the possibility to circumvent most of those problems, and I was eager to try.

After being introduced to conferencing by Dr. Mapp, I decided to hold weekly conferences apart from classtime when teaching freshman English at Middle Tennessee State University in the spring of 1991, with many of the students having failed the course the previous fall semester. This was a perfect class to try this method because most of them believed that their previous failing grade had proved to them they could not write. I tried Donald Murray's method in making the students speak first in the conference to tell

what worked and did not work in the paper. However, many of these students told me that if they knew what worked and what did not, they would not have failed the course the first time. When I asked why they had failed before, most did not know that, either: "I just kept failing the papers, but I never really knew what I was doing wrong." As we sat talking about their writing, I saw myself like the worker who comes to help a person after a tornado has ripped his house into a million pieces, asking, while picking up a brick, "Does this go in that spot?", with many of their compositions almost that scattered. So, I would start asking that same question, "Does this go here?", with the first paragraph, breaking it down sentence-by-sentence. That's how I began my conferences, reading the paper and then asking questions to see what belonged where, to see if there was more between the lines than in them. I began to understand that the composing process is best served through the conference setting; composing is a messy business that can go a million ways before a writer figures out what she wants to say. When I would talk to a student about what she meant to say in a certain passage, I realized that her 'round-about, anecdotal way of answering my questions by telling stories of her thoughts at the time of writing was the closest I could get to that student's actual composing process. Then I could make connections with what she said and what she wrote. We were working toward the goal of

seeing writing as a process, as something organic, as a process that shows what one really thinks about something. The first time I heard a student say, "Well, I meant to say this, and I can see that I didn't say that in this paragraph," I knew that we had both made progress: the student was making progress in her own composing process, and I was making progress as one who encourages that process. This system also freed me from hours of writing vacuous marginal comments that were as disconnected to the students' composing processes as a severed limb from a body.

The purpose of this dissertation is simple: to give a background of the history and movements of rhetoric to show the importance of teachers of composition having a modern philosophical base on which they build their classes, to exhibit the progress that five of my students made in a semester while being involved in the one-to-one conferencing process, and to encourage other composition instructors looking for a workable method that one-to-one conferencing might be the one they have been searching for.

Chapter 2

Background and Review of the Literature

C.H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon, in their Rhetorical Traditions and the Teaching of Writing, state that teachers must realize many classroom problems stem from a lack of a conscious philosophical base in the instructors' own teaching processes. According to Knoblauch and Brannon:

Writing is often taught as though it were a mechanical act of selecting prefabricated forms for preconceived content; as though it were nothing but a range of technical skills to be delivered by masters to apprentices through lecture, then memorized and practiced until proficiency is achieved; as though human beings lack verbal competence until teachers provide them with it; as though the surface decorum of texts were more valuable than quality of thought; indeed even as though decorum were equivalent to intellectual quality. (4)

They believe that this focusing on "surface decorum of texts" is the pedagogical result of the "philosophical perspective of ancient formalism" (14). This formalism, or "classical rhetoric," as described by Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg in The Rhetorical Tradition, has its beginning in Greece late in the fourth century, B.C., with

Aristotle's system and the elaboration on that system by Cicero and Quintilian (3), with its major documents being Aristotle's Rhetorica, Cicero's De Inventione and De Oratore, the Rhetorica ad Herennium, and Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria (Knoblauch and Brannon 22). Classical rhetoric is both the practice of persuasive oratory and the description of ways to construct a successful speech, with its intent to teach a practical art, not serve as a form of inquiry. In this classical system, three main types of public speech constitute the entire domain of rhetoric: the legal speech, concerned with questioning the past judgement of a court; the political speech, concerned with moving a legislature to future action; and the ceremonial speech, concerned with strengthening the public's beliefs about the country's state of affairs (Bizzell and Herzberg 3).

Brannon and Knoblauch believe the teaching attitude and practices that spring from this persuasive discourse reflect the ancient epistemology that

ideas exist before language, that the content of discourse is wholly independent of its form, that knowledge is fixed and stable, [and in] the possession of a master who passes it on to the students, and that writing is largely a ceremonial activity. (24)

Present-day application of this epistemology has composition teachers recommending, or requiring, students follow a

progression of writing stages (select subject, formulate a thesis, fill an outline, etc.), implying that ideas are formulated outside language and then assigned symbols in discourse. Evidence that teachers separate content from form is seen in assignments that require certain forms be used, such as the five-paragraph essay and the cause/effect essay, both requiring students to fill a specific model (Knoblauch and Brannon 24). Donald M. Murray, in A Writer Teaches Writing, views this epistemology as faulty:

Meaning is not thought up and then written down. The act of writing is an act of thought . . . it is this concept that is most often misunderstood by academicians. They give writing assignments based on the assumption that writing begins after the thinking is concluded, and they respond to those assignments as if the etiquette of language were more important than the thinking represented by language. (3)

For some of us, Murray's words serve as a mirror, reflecting the image of misguided teachers, instead of the informed ones we perceive ourselves to be. And, gazing at this reflection, we may ask the question, "How did I unconsciously adopt philosophical tenets of a rhetoric that focuses on form?"

First, part of the answer lies with Francis Bacon. William Covino, in "Defining Advanced Composition:

Contributions from the History of Rhetoric," states that Bacon ushers in the Enlightenment in 1605 when he

equates advanced knowledge with uniformity and universal principles, with certainty, with the schematization of diverse phenomena under the rubric of 'simple Forms or differences of things, which are few in number.' (113)

Here Bacon is laying the groundwork for the narrowing of the presentation of knowledge in a few "simple Forms." Also, Covino points out that later in that same century the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge reaffirms Bacon's stance by stating their theory on

the importance of reducing and containing the diversity of the world, reinforcing the prevailing belief that intellectual maturity coincides with order, perspicuity, and closure.

(113)

These statements show the eighteenth-century's calling for rhetoric to move toward a more "scientific" theory and method (Bizzell and Herzberg 12), and the beginning of the shift in the practice of rhetoric toward precisely controlled language, a shift that turns into a full-blown movement in the 1800's.

Some of the signs of the movement toward pedagogical methods of producing precisely controlled language can be traced to a nineteenth century book called A Practical

System of Rhetoric by Samuel P. Newman, first in making use of terms similar to our modes of discourse, according to Robert J. Connors in "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse," in The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook (24). Newman's text is the most widely-used rhetoric between 1820 and 1860, going through at least sixty editions during that time (25). Yet, Alexander Bain, a Scottish logician and educator, is the one who popularizes the modes "not merely as a classification of discourse, but as a conceptualizing strategy for teaching composition," through the 1866 American edition of his English Composition and Rhetoric. According to Connors, after this time the study of rhetoric in America is "mutated from a traditional (that is, classically-derived) analysis of argument, eloquence, style, and taste into a discipline much more concerned with forms" (26). A common method in the 1880's and early 1890's is to have students memorize rules and principles of composition without paying attention to whether the students could write well (Kitzhaber 208). This regurgitation of memorized information, either verbally or in written form, is one way instructors could deal with grading larger numbers of students in their classes. Textbooks such as Adams Sherman Hill's The Principles of Rhetoric, and Their Application, used at Harvard from 1878 to the early 1900's, give these overburdened teachers, or those inexperienced or disinterested ones, a teaching and grading guide with

dogmatic "pronouncements on matters of usage," making grading quicker and simpler and discouraging student questions about why certain aspects of their writing are unacceptable (Kitzhaber 62). Since Hill is from Harvard, his philosophy of composition echoes the same underlying message as the Harvard Reports by the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric, and the message tightly adhered to by those wielding power in the majority of the schools-- then and today: the superiority of mechanical correctness above all else. Albert Kitzhaber ends his chapter on "The Field of English" in his Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900 with this assessment:

This emphasis on superficial correctness, however, contributed in no small measure to the ideal of superficial correctness that was to dominate composition instruction for many years thereafter. (47)

In 1892, following in this new rhetorical course and springboarding also from Bain's work, rhetorician John Genung's textbook The Practical Elements of Rhetoric also helps "establish the paradigm that has dominated the teaching of rhetoric in the United States for nearly a decade," as stated by Richard E. Young in "Concepts of Art and the Teaching of Writing" in The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing (130). Although Genung believes rhetoric is concerned with the whole man, he also states that any

practical pedagogy dealing with the subject must exclude creativity because the creative process is an unexplainable, mysterious one, issuing from the writer himself (131). Therefore, Genung's idea of writing with skill includes creativity, but he perceives

a practical rhetoric must be limited to the conventions and mechanics of discourse--for example, to the modes and structures of discourse, the characteristics of various genres, the norms of style and usage--which are valuable in organizing, editing, and judging what has already been produced by more mysterious powers.

(131)

So, by Genung's definition, rhetoric can be only concerned with the craft of the language, since the magical mystery of invention cannot be taught.

No war begins because of a single cause, and neither does a rhetorical tradition. Such "formists" as Newman, Bain, and Genung are not writing to a static academic community; they are writing to an educational community in upheaval. Donald C. Stewart notes, in "Some History Lessons for Composition Teachers," that rapidly expanding college enrollments consisting of heterogenous and unprepared students, and the push to admit scientific, technical, English literature, and modern language courses into the curriculum serve as great pressures to the nineteenth-

century college teachers to find ways of teaching and testing these students (17). Stewart lists as other "complicating events" the three reports by the Committee on Composition to the Harvard Board of Overseers in 1892, 1895, and 1897, indicting secondary schools for not teaching college-bound students to "spell, punctuate, and observe proprieties of usage" (17). Another such event is the creation of the Harvard program by A.S. Hill, the Boylton Professor of Rhetoric, obsessed with mechanical matters in composition, using his previously mentioned book as its text (17). Stewart believes these factors are the main causes in nineteenth-century America of the adoption of the "doctrine of correctness" that remains a force in teaching today (17).

Robert Connors sees the teaching of composition dominated by this mindset of the nineties until the twenties and thirties when new textbooks concerned with exposition appear (29). Through books such as Maurice Garland Fulton's Expository Writing, the methods of exposition include

definition, analysis, partition, interpretation, reportage, evaluation by standards, comparison, contrast, classification, process analysis, cause-and-effect, induction, deduction, examples, and illustrations. (29)

It is interesting that Connor believes that these modes are ignored after 1950 because of teachers' realizations that the divisions, while classifying and emphasizing the result

of writing, do not really help students learn to write (33). He also states that most teachers have abandoned this practice, and those who haven't are "out of touch with current theory," only stressing "what" is being talked about, not the "why" a thing is discussed (32-33).

If Connor's statement is true, and most teachers realize that writing is, as Donald Murray states, "an attempt to solve a problem, to find a meaning, to discover its own way to meaning" (A Writer Teaches Writing 9), who is turning out all the students bludgeoned into believing that form is superior to and separate from content, thus void of any self-discovery of meaning? From the sheer numbers of this type of student today, evidently many composition teachers are out of touch with current theory--many not even realizing that there is a theory, current or classical--and are not aware that they adhere to the philosophy of form, convinced, as stated by James Miller in Word, Self, and Reality: The Rhetoric of the Imagination, the teaching of orderly processes will result in good writing (3-4).

However, Miller makes another biting commentary:

The result, though, has too often been not good writing but dead writing, obedient to all the inhibitions and restraints drilled into the reason, but generally dehumanized and unreadable. (3-4)

Roger Garrison agrees that students can learn in a Genung-

based classroom, or as Daniel Fogerty coined the "current-traditional rhetoric" classroom (qtd. in Stewart 16); they can learn how others have written, what techniques professionals apparently use to achieve certain effects, what grammatical errors to avoid, and "how to write for the demands, quirks, prejudices, and tastes of a particular instructor (how to pass the course)," activities that will keep students busy but are "largely irrelevant to the business of learning to write" (56). Donald Stewart says that these instructors keep their students busy drilling in grammar, spelling, and punctuation; and are fond of formulas for grading: four misspelled words, two comma splices, and two subject-verb agreement errors (or any other teacher imposed combination) will earn an F for a student's paper (17). Like their nineteenth-century colleagues, such teachers believe this method makes easier the job of grading large numbers of essays. Moreover, the problem of time consumption is a major one for English instructors today, just as it was one hundred years ago. Anyone who has never taught writing will find it difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the large blocks of time that an English teacher must devote to evaluating student essays. Garrison, in his essay "One-to-One: Tutorial Instruction in Freshman Composition," computes that for every one-hundred-eighty hours that an instructor spends in class or preparing for class, another five hundred hours is required to correct

student papers (70). That five hundred hours is the total sum if the instructor spends only ten minutes per paper. However, Nancy Sommers points out what all composition teachers already know: many papers require twenty to forty minutes to adequately mark with corrections and comments, all usually without the student present (Sommers 148). In view of this incredible expenditure of time, it is not difficult to understand a teacher's desire to somehow reduce the number of hours for which she is in no way financially compensated. However, the sad truth remains that when an instructor teaches students that acceptable writing is adherence to rules of form, the time writing and grading are virtually wasted in terms of the purpose of having students write: enabling the student to communicate in an acceptable form in his/her own voice. Such emphasis on form is extolling the beauty of the ring box, ignoring the diamond inside. The writing instructor is the one who should be saying: "Open the box; the treasure is inside!"

However, extensive written teacher comments on student papers have become part of this theory of form, comments supposedly clarifying for the student all the problems with the essay and showing how to correct them to create an acceptable paper. However, according to "Responding to Student Writing" in the May 1982 issue of College Composition and Communication, teachers' comments often fall far short of the best intentions for instruction. In a year

long study of the commenting styles of thirty-five teachers at the University of Oklahoma and New York University, Nancy Sommers, Lil Brannon, and Cyril Knoblauch made two findings:

1) "teachers' comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting; and 2) most teachers' comments are not text-specific and could be interchanged, rubber-stamped, from text to text." Sommers, 149-152

If, according to student feedback, most written comments do exactly the opposite of what the instructor intends, all her long hours of tedious grading are wasted. Roger Garrison is emphatic on this point:

"Traditional methods of freshmen composition instruction [including grading] are teacher-oriented and text-oriented, and are grossly inefficient. (If the writing of the typical college graduate is any measure, the methods are also ineffective)" (56).

Judith Kollman, in "How to Teach Composition on an Individual Basis--and Survive," asserts that effective teaching is nearly impossible in the traditional, teacher-centered classroom structure (13-17). In Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference, Muriel Harris says that she agrees with Kollman because the writing teacher needs to

talk with students as they are writing or preparing to write to indicate that she views "writing as a process of discovery in which we can help the writer learn how to shape a piece of writing as it is taking form" (5). Harris also states that when a writing instructor talks and reacts like a reader with the student, the student can see that "writing is primarily an act of communication in which the needs of the reader are crucial considerations" (5). As Garrison, Kollman and Harris all agree, writing classes must be student-centered, focusing on individual needs. Donald M. Murray states that "we do not teach writing effectively if we try to make all students and all writing the same" (A Writer Teaches Writing 5). He goes on to say:

"Our greatest challenge in developing the craft and the art of teaching is to learn how to allow learning, how to get out of the way of our students, so that we can run after them, supporting them when they need support, encouraging them when they've earned it, and kicking tail when they need to get going" (5).

Thomas Carnicelli defines conference teaching as the coming together of "only two parties, a teacher and a student, not a teacher and a class," and that the strength of the conference method is the "conversation between these parties, rather than statements or written comments by only one" (101). Murray states that conferences are not "mini

lectures but the working talk of fellow writers sharing their experience with the writing process" (148). And in this method, "process" is the operative word. According to Muriel Harris, historically the writing teacher's job has been to teach the process of writing; however, Harris asks just how does one teach a process? She believes that one can talk about processes theoretically, or demonstrate processes, or one can "participate in processes, like a tennis pro talking with a player as they practice backhand together" (9). Jo An McGuire Simmons, in the article "The One-to-One Method of Teaching Composition" in which she explains Roger Garrison's method, states that Garrison "sees the student-teacher relationship as that of apprentice writer to editor" (222). In One-to-One: Resources for Conference-Centered Writing, Charles Dawe and Edward Dornan take exception to Garrison's view of the instructor as editor because "editors are concerned with perfecting writing for publication, not with training beginning writers to write clearly. We see this new role as closer to a coach" (4). Susan Florio-Ruane says because there is a shift in conference instruction from product to process, the teacher's role is potentially transformed "from task master and evaluator to respondent" (2-3).

However one perceives the role of the conference instructor, the focus of the conference is the same: the student and the student's writing. Conference teaching,

according to Donald Murray, is the "most effective--and the most practical--method of teaching composition" (147). In a personal interview at his home in Durham, New Hampshire, Murray emphasized this point:

I once was at a religious camp, and a preacher decided to teach me to swim by throwing me in water over my head. By his not giving me any help, I almost drowned. So, after that, I was terrified of the water. Every kid coming in there [a composition class], particularly one who is terrified of writing, needs help. If you don't help him, what are you going to do? If you don't help him swim, he will repeat the predictable errors of the past. (Personal Interview)

One way that conference instructors help terrified writing students is to deemphasize grading every paper. Murray says the purpose of the conference "is not to evaluate or conclude anything, it is a conference about writing in process" (A Writer 161). Dawe and Dornan state that because they are able to give immediate feedback, they "no longer feel compelled to mug student papers with a red pencil" (3). Murray sets up his schedule having the students write all semester without giving a formal grade to each individual assignment because he believes student writers have to be taught that their first draft is not their final draft (A Writer 164). In the conference setting

a student can discuss what he thinks the paper is saying, enabling the teacher to guide the student in what still needs to be written. In "Perhaps the Professor Should Cut Class," Lester A. Fisher and Donald Murray describe what they told their students about grades and the importance of revision:

You will receive no grades on individual papers. You will select your own best papers for evaluation at the end of the course. You are encouraged to submit major revisions as a substitute for new papers. A paper that is merely proofread--spelling corrected, grammar untangled--is not a revision. A revision is a complete rethinking, redesigning and rewriting of the paper. In a revision the subject usually expands or retracts itself and the form itself may change. The student who learns the most from the course may be the student who revises one or two papers during the entire course. (4)

Lil Brannon and C. H. Knoblauch, in their article "On Students' Rights to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response," maintain that when an instructor does not "get out of the way of the students," as Murray encourages, the teacher probably will appropriate the students' texts, the reader assuming primary control of the writers' choices and freely "correcting" those choices whenever the writers

deviate from "the teacher-reader's conception of what the developing text 'ought' to look like or 'ought' to be doing" (158). Brannon and Knoblauch say that this method tells the writers that the agenda of the teacher is more important than the students' own, "that what they wanted to say is less relevant than the teacher's impression of what they should have said" (158). In "The Ins and Outs of Conferencing," Muriel Harris notes the product from this type of teaching can only be "passive writers waiting for us to tell them what to do next" (88). Also, such denial of students' control over what they want to say reduces their incentive to write, and as Mark Connelly voices for the majority of writers, the incentive to write comes from the satisfaction of knowing that something has been communicated to the best of one's ability (5).

Murray's student conference style is just the opposite of appropriation; his pattern "incorporates response theory: the instructor responds to the student's response and to the student's suggestions for improvement" (A Writer Teaches Writing 148). He goes on to say that the best way to encourage student response is to allow it (153); his students know that they must be the first ones to speak in a conference. And, the instructor must sit quietly until the student speaks, no matter how difficult that is. Murray suggests that if the student just cannot find the words to say at the beginning, the instructor can have him bring in a

written evaluation, a sentence or paragraph on a three-by-five-inch card, telling what the student thinks works and what needs work (153). Although teachers new to conferencing might feel less comfortable with this method than with written comments, as Connelly points out, all can take comfort that there is no single, correct response to a student's writing. The main thing in working with a student writer is to try to allow the student to instruct himself or herself, and to deal with only one issue at a time (Murray A Writer Teaches Writing 154). Roger Garrison believes that writing is a "developmental craft," with lesser skills built upon one another (62). He deems an "operational skill," when mastered, as one that allows the student to learn further:

There are priorities in the teaching of the needed operational skills for writing. These priorities derive from the basic assumption an instructor makes about how writing is done. The priorities then become the basic outline of the writing course: the successive steps or skills that the student needs to master--one at a time" (62).

Janet Emig, in a 1960 article in the English Journal, says that low performance skills in college English were the reason her principal instituted one-to-one conferencing for their students in 1957 (223). The results Emig notes were that the recent graduates were able to meet the challenges

of their college English requirements, and that those still in high school who had participated in the full three years of conferences experienced the "development of commendable skills" (227), possibly those same operational skills mentioned by Garrison.

In his book A Writer Teaches Writing, Murray maintains that "Writing is a craft before it is an art; writing may appear to be magic, but it is our responsibility to take our students backstage to watch the pigeons being tucked up the magician's sleeve" (4). By mastering operational skills, the student will begin to learn the "tricks of the trade," how to be a craftsperson of writing, retaining the power over his own writing. However, learning the craft is still a difficult process, requiring much more from the writer than just the operational skills, as Garrison points out by using an analogy first used by Elizabeth Bowen, given here in its entirety because it is one that may prove helpful in a conference explanation:

Imagine the writer, perched like Humpty Dumpty on top of the wall. On one side of the wall, imagine a great heap of all the material he wants to write about: facts, happenings, feelings, ideas. On the other side of the wall, facing it, is a reader. He cannot see what the writer sees; he can see only the wall. The writer's job is to select from the welter of material on the opposite side of the

wall what he wants the reader to know and understand, shape this selection into sequence and sense, translate the sequence into words and sentences and paragraphs, and finally post these on the reader's side of the wall. These written symbols are all that reader has to make some sort of contact with the material the writer has tried to communicate from the wall's other side. (68)

The task of "communicating from the wall's other side" becomes clearer as the students realize their responsibility for creating lucid text when the teacher-reader reacts to what is posted on her side of the "wall." Conferencing allows for such immediate response and feedback.

Dr. Susan Seyfarth, associate professor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, made a good observation about the conference method: "When evaluating student writing, an English instructor has to invest massive amounts of time anyway; it might as well be spent with the student" (Personal Interview). When the instructor's objective is to spend time with the student, there are almost as many ways to set up conferences as there are teacher personalities. Murray states that "you have to go your own course, your own way, within your own personality" (Personal Interview).

Thomas Carnicelli says:

A conference may be as short as thirty seconds, or as long as the two parties wish to talk. It may

be held in a corner of a classroom, in a hallway, or a cafeteria. It may be conducted by telephone.

(101)

Murray believes that conferences

can be brief, and should be brief, that the brevity of conferences gives them a productive intensity and limits the agenda in a constructive way. The purpose of the conference is not to lecture or to gossip or to visit; the purpose of the conference is to give the writer an opportunity to test the writer's opinion of the most important element in the piece of writing-- accomplishment or problem--with an experienced writer. (A Writer Teaches 173)

Murray prefers twenty minutes, even with twenty-page papers, once a week (173). In A Writer Teaches Writing he gives several sample time schedules as guides for others to set up conferences. These can be held outside of class time or can be set up in class with students working on individual projects that are discussed briefly with the instructor. In the May 1984 issue of College Composition and Communication, Allen J. Frantzen and Leonard A. Podis offer their plan to subdivide classes into small groups and to "rotate full-class meetings, small group discussions, and private conferences," which they feel individualizes their courses to the point of minimizing instructor time invested

(234). In his article in the March 1976 College English, John V. Knapp says that he sets aside "two or three blocks of three hours each on two different days," scheduling fifteen minutes per student per single block of time. In one block of three hours he is able to evaluate usually ten to twelve pieces of writing, and in less than three blocks of time Knapp states he can see twenty-five students, and feels that he spends "no more time on theme evaluation than . . . in the old days. Now, instead of burning the midnight oil, I do all my evaluation during the day, when I'm fresh and energetic" (650). When such positive results are available and achievable, more teachers need to explore the possibilities of using the conference schedule.

What do students think of the conferencing method and are they improving as writers? The research confirms that students approve of this method and that their writing is improving. Thomas Carnicelli read almost 1,800 student responses to conference teaching from the ninety-two sections of composition offered in the 1977-78 academic year at the University of New Hampshire. Although there were some negative comments, the "great majority of the students liked the conference method, and felt they had learned a great deal from it" (101-102). Jo An McGuire Simmons reports that in 1978 the Los Angeles Community College District tested the effectiveness of Roger Garrison's method in both freshman English and remedial composition classes on

four campuses--Los Angeles City College, East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, and Valley College. The results were encouraging: the students instructed according to Garrison's plan showed "significantly greater gains between pretest and posttest than did students not instructed according to that plan;" classes taught by this method "retained more students than others; and teacher and student questionnaires showed high morale for both in one-to-one classes" (228-229). In a study conducted by Jack Kates at El Camino College in Torrance, California, and at Compton College in Compton, California, two experimental groups received feedback through conferencing while two control groups received feedback through written comments. Kates found that "analysis of individual and mean group achievement showed that students who received feedback via conferencing had greater achievement gains than did students in the control group" (1). In an external evaluation of Allen Frantzen and Leonard Podis' modified version of this method using small-group discussion along with personal conferences, R. Scott Muirhead, Curriculum Evaluation Specialist at Oberlin College, discovered that "every student in the group improved measurably," with evaluations "consistently favorable" (237). In another study, Barbara Tomlinson found that although there were no significant differences in final course grades of tutorial versus classroom groups, the

student attitudes toward writing instruction were more favorable among tutorial students (2). In the same vein, Judith Budz and Terry Grabar were surprised to find in their study that the classroom students scored slightly higher than the conference students; however, they also discovered that the tutorial students "judged themselves to have made progress in writing" and were "unanimously favorable in their evaluation of the individualized instruction" (655-656). Another favorable response for conferences is the report of statistics from Stanford University's freshman English program for 1980-1984, which

support the idea that students favor courses in which the instructor meets once a week with the students as a group and once a week individually with every student in tutorial over more traditional lecture/seminar courses in which the instructor meets students in class twice a week but gives very few or no tutorials. (Carolyn Walker and David Elias 267)

Finally, in the study Walker and Elias conducted asking students and teachers what constituted a high-rated conference, the students said that a successful conference focuses on the student and the student's work, not the teacher or his/her agenda (281).

Positive results, enthusiastic students--what all instructors want. However, if these elements are not part

of a course's ending, an instructor must do what Knoblauch and Brannon suggest: check to see if the problems in the classroom are stemming from a non-existent or faulty philosophical base. If so, that teacher must establish a sound one that will meet the needs of present-day students. And, if the teacher embraces the modern philosophy of the student-centered classroom, a viable choice is the conference method, focusing on the individual writing needs of each student, a method endorsed by instructors like Murray, Harris, Garrison, and others from all over the country, plus by students who have become better writers because of this system.

Chapter Three

Explanation of the Experiment

As stated in the Introduction, my conference protocol is different than Donald Murray's; it is different from anyone else's because it is mine, molded around my personality. When the student comes in, I read the paper then, not before. I respond to the work as an immediate reader, not as a grader. After reading, I ask what the student wanted to say in the paper; then I ask, while having the student read the first paragraph, if she thinks the introduction sets the thesis for the reader. If so, we follow with each paragraph to see if what she wanted to say is present. If not, we discuss what she wants to say and how she thinks she could say it. That process might take time because our talk might take many turns before the student begins to see her way clear, to feel more confident in how she wants to take her next composing step. Some conferences end without the student coming to any conclusion, which is fine because the writing process is not always conclusive. That is part of what I want the student to realize, to observe that I am just as content with one result as another. My low-key response is very important to show that we are both writers working toward a common goal of finding different ways of saying what she wants to say, and that her suggestions are as important as mine. I try to

keep the atmosphere as light as possible, with times for laughter, too. I find my attitude can make the whole process much smoother as I prove to the student that I really do care about what she has to say, that I do not have a hidden agenda, that I believe we will both improve as writers because of our working together.

In the next conference I grade the essay as I read it; if the student is still off the desired goal, I have her write it again. However, I was grading more than I wished because of the departmental rule of a required six essays a semester. Therefore, in conferences we talked about an idea one week, then graded the completed paper the next. That was not enough time between thinking and grading. That part of my process needs revision.

After combining conferences with class meetings for three semesters, I wanted to test the conference-only method to see how the students would respond to such a non-traditional schedule. However, because I was an adjunct and not full-time faculty, I was wary of such a diversion from the academic teaching norm. I was also hesitant because I wanted the students themselves to have the opportunity to decide if they wished to participate in a "no formal class meeting" experiment, but by the time we held the first class other sections of composition would be closed, making it hard for them to have a fair chance to decide whether to drop my class to pick a more traditional one. I was also

concerned with having seventy-five students in three classes to schedule for fifteen-minute time slots, since I could only be on the campus from noon to four on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, eight until four on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Within those time limits I created twenty-seven slots on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and twenty-six on Tuesdays and Thursdays, totaling only fifty-three of the needed seventy-five. At this point in January I sought advice about the time load from a colleague who told me I would be crazy by March if I tried to individually conference that many students. Another told me I might as well be teaching in high school for all the time I would be in the building. However, in the previous two semesters I had witnessed the progress individual writers had made in an atmosphere conducive to discerning and discussing problems and strengths unique to them, and I could not return to the old way that did not work in the student's favor. I decided to conference every other week with each student, touching base in class in off weeks, designating the ones who had the fifteen-minute conference the first week of class the "Week One" people, and those the next the "Week Two" people. I first constructed a syllabus to support the conference-class system if the students decided against the total conference plan. I used Elements of Argument, Third Edition by Annette Rottenberg and the Harbrace Handbook as the texts, with To Kill a Mockingbird as our novel. The English Department

requires that students write six five-hundred- to six-hundred-word essays, with one being a research project and one a critical work on literature. I allowed for five absences from class for the MWF class and four for the TTH. At the beginning of each class period both the students and I wrote for ten minutes on anything we wished; I would be the first reader about every other day, and I would give five bonus points for any volunteer readers. That was my favorite part of those classes. After the readings, we would discuss the reading from the texts, write in class, evaluate each other's papers in peer reading groups, or have reports from the groups on different topics. Under this plan for ten weeks the students wrote two papers and were working on the third when students in the 8:00 a.m. TTH class said they were ready to try the all-conference format for the remaining ten weeks of the semester. When I told the other two classes about our plan, they decided--to the student--to participate also. I explained that we would try this format for three weeks; they would evaluate it then to see if all thought it beneficial enough to continue for the remaining seven weeks. I mapped out the schedule we would follow, including a "no absence-no late papers" policy that the students surprisingly and enthusiastically endorsed, even signing a "contract" to show they understood the new, more stringent regulations. Since we had the class time already set aside in our schedules, I split it into five-

minute segments, and the students signed up for one slot on their previously free week from a conference, so when the Week One students had their fifteen minute time, the Week Two folks had their five-minute conference. Thus they had a fifteen-minute conference one week and a five-minute conference the next.

In the room I had been assigned desk space, I made a special bulletin board to post the Week One and Two schedules for each week, reminders for upcoming projects, and messages to/from students. The students knew that they were welcome at any time to check the message board for their times, leave me a note on it, or call during those office hours. Since the office space had no window and my desk faced a concrete wall, I placed a poster of Monet's garden as the focal point above the desk, with small bumper-sticker-type signs with funny and wise sayings placed around the poster. Around the top of my desk I had photographs of different people I love and respect and of places I have visited (Donald Murray in front of his home after we had just talked for an hour, my mentor Miss Helen Wright at her writing table just after her eighty-first birthday, a view from Ashford Castle in Ireland), plus a big container filled with the "good kind" of bubble gum, as one student said, and small Tootsie Rolls, with a sign saying, "Miss Coleman's Students and Friends: Help Yourselves!" Later, as the word got around the department there were free treats, I had to

add to the sign: "Within reason!" I offered the students the treats first thing in the conference, saying, "These are like the prizes at the dentist's office--a little pleasure with your pain." I found that the treats and colorful setting helped to put the student a bit more at ease, made the meeting seem more informal, and gave something to do and/or to look at in the wordless moments of the process.

As the conferences worked out, the Week One Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule had thirty-six fifteen-minute conferences with thirty-five five-minute ones on MWF. Of the Week One, TTH had twenty-four of the thirty-six fifteen-minute conferences and twenty-six of the five-minute meetings. Week Two had thirty-seven fifteen-minute meetings and thirty-seven five-minute ones, with twenty-four fifteen-minute meetings on TTH and twenty-two five-minute ones. We discussed the student's thinking and writing in one conference, we evaluated papers in the next, and we assessed revisions in the following conference. After going to a full-conference format, we only held class twice more: once for an explanation by a MTSU librarian on how to use the new on-line computer catalogue and how to use the microfiche, microfilm, and newspaper indexes; and another for a short-answer test on To Kill A Mockingbird. Since it was essential to keep up with what was accomplished and agreed upon in each meeting, I invested in a notebook computer in which I created a separate file for each student. After

each meeting I pulled up that student's file and made notes, although interruptions or stacked up students outside my door prevented my doing this every time.

When the students evaluated the program after three weeks, I was encouraged by their comments. The only negative responses concerned the shortness of the five-minute meeting not allowing enough time for some students to feel heard, and the difficulty in finding me free apart from an assigned time. The rest were very supportive. Therefore, we decided to continue the conference-only format.

After the spring semester was over, I randomly picked five of my 112 students to use in a case study to see if progress attributed to the conferencing process could be tracked by grading each of the five's last English 111 paper and three papers written while in my 112 class. Our department's policy is to keep on file the papers of the English 111 and 112 students for one semester only; therefore, I had to limit my sample selection process to those students whose previous semester final papers I could locate. After I selected the samples, Dr. Robert C. Petersen, director of the MTSU undergraduate English program, noted I would be limiting my results if I did not have other English instructors grade the samples also in order to get a consensus as to the positive and negative aspects of the papers. Thus, I enlisted the help of Mrs.

Dana Basinger, adjunct instructor of freshman composition English courses at the University of Montevallo in Montevallo, Alabama. Mrs. Basinger and I had been colleagues in the English department at Homewood High School in Birmingham, Alabama, and we had gone through the Master's program in English at the University of Alabama in Birmingham at the same time. I hold her ability as a composition instructor in highest regard, and I was confident of Mrs. Basinger's ability to help in this project. My second reader was Dr. Larry Mapp, professor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, also in charge of the English graduate and the English graduate teaching assistants' programs. In his spare time, Dr. Mapp authors the workbook that accompanies the Harbrace Handbook, leaps over tall buildings in one or two bounds, and helps desperate graduate students overcome bouts of despondency and fear when faced with undergraduate teaching problems. I had the twenty papers typed up with number listings only, placing them in random order, giving each grader a set to score. Although I had difficulty finding suitable scoring samples, after reading Denise Lynch's "Easing the Process: A Strategy for Evaluating Compositions" in the October 1982 College Composition and Communication, Paul Diederich's "Cooperative Preparation and Rating of Essay Tests" in the April 1967 English Journal, and Arthur Cohen's "Assessing College Students' Ability to Write Compositions" in the

Winter 1973 Research in the Teaching of English, I constructed a holistic scoring sheet with parts from all three of their samples, plus ideas of my own. (See Appendix for samples.) There were four sections to the scoring sheet, all worth ten points each: content, organization, mechanics, and style. The graders marked certain "yes/no" statements about each section, then circled a score between two and ten. I constructed a form to record each student's scores per grader, then one to record all three graders' final scores per student, averaging the three scores. I then averaged the five students' scores from the four papers which gave four composite scores. The composite score on paper one, the final English 111 paper, was 62%; the second 66%; the third 77%, and the fourth, which was the final exam for English 112, was 64%. I consulted Dr. Larry W. Morris, chairperson of the MTSU psychology department, about running any statistical tests on the data. He told me that although my using only five students would probably make the resulting information not "powerful enough" to report any significant progress in the students' grades, I could run a repeated measures analysis of variance on the four composite scores on the possibility that there would be traceable improvement. I sought help with this statistical analysis from Ms. Lucinda T. Lea, manager of the MTSU computer services department.

Chapter Four
Results and Conclusions

First, the results from the individual papers were encouraging. Each section of the scoring sheet was assigned ten points, a total of forty points a paper. I averaged the three graders' scores per section per paper, averaged the four section grades for the total out of forty, then divided the possible score into the actual score to arrive at a percentage on a hundred point scale (See Appendix E for graph):

STUDENT A: PAPER 1:

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|-------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| G1) | 8 | 8 | 10 | 8 |
| G2) | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| G3) | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| T) | 20 | 22 | 26 | 20 |
| 100%= | 67% | 73% | 87% | 67%= 74% |

STUDENT A: PAPER 2

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| G2) | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| G3) | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| T) | 23 | 23 | 22 | 21 |
| 100%= | 77% | 77% | 73% | 70%= 74% |

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|---------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| STUDENT A: PAPER 3 | | | | |
| G1) | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| G2) | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| G3) | 10 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| T) | 28 | 26 | 25 | 26 |
| 100%= | 93% | 87% | 83% | 87%= 88% |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| STUDENT A: PAPER 4 | | | | |
| G1) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| G2) | 7 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| G3) | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| T) | 20 | 20 | 21 | 19 |
| 100%= | 67% | 67% | 70% | 63%= 67% |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| STUDENT B: PAPER 1 | | | | |
| G1) | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| G2) | 7 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| G3) | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| T) | 18 | 12 | 19 | 17 |
| 100%= | 60% | 40% | 63% | 57%= 56% |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| STUDENT B: PAPER 2 | | | | |
| G1) | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| G2) | 5 | 5 | 7 | 5 |

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|-------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| G3) | 7 | 5 | 7 | 6 |
| T) | 17 | 14 | 20 | 17 |
| 100%= | 47% | 47% | 67% | 57%= 55% |

STUDENT B: PAPER 3

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| G2) | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 |
| G3) | 8 | 7 | 9 | 9 |
| T) | 22 | 21 | 26 | 23 |
| 100%= | 73% | 70% | 87% | 77%= 77% |

STUDENT B: PAPER 4:

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| G2) | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| G3) | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| T) | 17 | 16 | 17 | 15 |
| 100%= | 57% | 53% | 57% | 50%= 54% |

STUDENT C: PAPER 1:

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 7 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| G2) | 8 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| G3) | 7 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| T) | 22 | 22 | 14 | 18 |
| 100%= | 73% | 73% | 47% | 60%= 63% |

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| STUDENT C: PAPER 2: | | | | |
| G1) | 7 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| G2) | 6 | 4 | 8 | 6 |
| G3) | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| T) | 21 | 19 | 24 | 19 |
| 100%= | 70% | 63% | 80% | 63%= 69% |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| STUDENT C: PAPER 3: | | | | |
| G1) | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| G2) | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| G3) | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| T) | 26 | 26 | 25 | 25 |
| 100%= | 87% | 87% | 83% | 83%= 85% |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| STUDENT C: PAPER 4: | | | | |
| G1) | 7 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| G2) | 7 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| G3) | 8 | 9 | 5 | 7 |
| T) | 22 | 24 | 15 | 19 |
| 100%= | 73% | 80% | 50% | 63%= 67% |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| STUDENT D: PAPER 1: | | | | |
| G1) | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| G2) | 6 | 5 | 7 | 5 |

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|-------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| G3) | 6 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| T) | 17 | 15 | 18 | 14 |
| 100%= | 57% | 50% | 60% | 47%= 54% |

STUDENT D: PAPER 2:

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| G2) | 7 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| G3) | 8 | 8 | 6 | 7 |
| T) | 21 | 19 | 20 | 18 |
| 100%= | 70% | 63% | 67% | 60%= 65% |

STUDENT D: PAPER 3:

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 7 | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| G2) | 8 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| G3) | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| T) | 24 | 26 | 22 | 22 |
| 100%= | 80% | 87% | 73% | 73%= 78% |

STUDENT D: PAPER 4:

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| G1) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| G2) | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| G3) | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| T) | 19 | 19 | 17 | 15 |
| 100%= | 63% | 63% | 57% | 50%= 58% |

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| STUDENT E: PAPER 1: | | | | |
| G1) | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| G2) | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| G3) | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| T) | 22 | 17 | 16 | 19 |
| 100%= | 73% | 57% | 53% | 63%= 62% |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| STUDENT E: PAPER 2: | | | | |
| G1) | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| G2) | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| G3) | 8 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| T) | 21 | 22 | 18 | 20 |
| 100%= | 70% | 73% | 60% | 67%= 68% |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| STUDENT E: PAPER 3 | | | | |
| G1) | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| G2) | 6 | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| G3) | 6 | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| T) | 12 | 19 | 20 | 18 |
| 100%= | 40% | 63% | 67% | 60%= 58% |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| STUDENT E: PAPER 4: | | | | |
| G1) | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 |

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | GRAMMAR | STYLE |
|-------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| G2) | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| G3) | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 |
| T) | 23 | 22 | 21 | 23 |
| 100%= | 77% | 73% | 70% | 77%= 74% |

After tabulating the individual scores per paper, I added together all five students' scores and divided by five to get a mean average per paper.

| | PAPER 1 | PAPER 2 | PAPER 3 | PAPER 4 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| STUDENT A: | 74 | 74 | 88 | 67 |
| STUDENT B: | 56 | 55 | 77 | 54 |
| STUDENT C: | 63 | 69 | 85 | 67 |
| STUDENT D: | 54 | 65 | 78 | 74 |
| STUDENT E: | 62 | 68 | 58 | 74 |
| AVERAGE: | 62% | 66% | 77% | 64% |

When looking at the mean average for paper two, the first one written for English 112, the score indicates a four-point rise in the students' performance from the essay written for the English 111 final; for paper three, the largest jump of eleven points from previous paper and fifteen points from the English 111 one. I was not very surprised to see the last score drop thirteen points because this was the students' final, written during a time that

historically does not produce students' best work. I would have hoped, though, that if the learning had been true learning, even the stress of the time would not affect the score so drastically. Even though there was a significant drop, the score still was two points higher than the previous semester's final written probably under the same stress as the 112 final. However, when we ran the repeated measured analysis of variance on the mean scores, the F ratio = 4.28123, showing a significance of .028 at the 95% confidence level. Mrs. Lea, the statistician who ran the program for me, stated that the significance was an encouraging sign for the results of this project.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I am convinced that one-to-one conferencing is a viable method of teaching composition, one that makes the best use of the student's time and mine. Anyone who has taught composition and has graded student writings knows that grades do not always show the incredible gains students make in a semester of hard work. That is the eternal problem of having to assign some type of grade to student writing. However, even before the encouraging final results for this project were compiled, I was more than pleased at the progress of my students, progress which I believe was a direct result of our using the conferencing method as our mode of operation. And I was not the only one who was pleased; the students who wrote an exit review of this non-traditional method stated that this had been the best use of instructional time because the conference focused on each individual's needs, that the conference did not waste one student's time in dealing with the shortcomings of another, that the conference demanded a certain level of responsibility--which the majority voiced as one of the best results--to treat the students as adults in expecting them to be present and on time to conferences and with assignments or to be dropped from the class, and finally, that the students felt they had improved as writers, wishing

all the composition classes could be conducted in this way. Also, the students were not the only ones who learned in this process. I learned more about writing every time I sat with a student, seeing a sentence from the author's perspective, from the authority's eyes. I am not the all-knowing composition khuna, and in every conference I am reminded of that. I learned that how the student feels about the whole writing process affects that student's writing, and I made it my priority to communicate the delicious satisfaction that comes with writing what one actually thinks, regardless of another's opinion of how well that is done. I learned to stress the satisfaction of communicating with another as our second goal. In this process, the individual student is centerstage where she seems to learn and grow the most. Therefore, the encouraging student progress shown through this project only reinforces what I already knew was true: the one-to-one conferencing method is a viable method to use when teaching composition classes.

As with most every project's conclusion, there is a call for more research to be done in this area. However, first I would encourage more composition instructors to be certain they have a firm philosophical base for their pedagogy, that they have their feet moving forward in the direction of the twenty-first century, instead of being mired in the processes of the nineteenth. Then, I would

suggest their investigating the possibility of implementing the one-to-one conferencing method in teaching composition. Although every situation has its own unique problems, one might find that there is some way to conference with students in some fashion. The process is tedious and draining; there is no denying that. However, as Mark Connelly points out, I no longer burn the midnight oil writing copious notes that I have to explain anyway, if ever asked about them. Now, when I go home from a long, hard day at the office, I am finished--no student papers to grade, no hours of class preparation to do. I also am satisfied that as we conference, we are moving closer to the goal of teaching writing: the student's teaching herself, of her beginning to realize, as Donald Murray says, how to tuck the pigeons up the sleeves of her own magician's gown, how to ply the tricks of the trade of writing. I invite others to come "backstage," to give the students the spotlight in a student-centered classroom, to breathe back the life that has been slowly squeezed out of students' writing by the pythonic coils of the nineteenth-century's obsession with form. The conference method is no cure-all, but it does put the responsibility of writing back where it belongs: on the shoulders of the students. Conferencing does release the instructor from all those long hours of scribbling notes into margins, allowing for instantaneous responses both from the teacher and the student writer. I would rather invest

the hours I have to put into evaluating student writing into directly communicating with the student, and it is an investment from which both the student and the instructor receive proven gains. As long as the student and I continue to learn about writing and our writing processes, I will use conferencing to teach my freshman composition classes.

Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A

Paul B. Diederich's scoring model, 1967:

| Topic_____ | Reader_____ | | Paper_____ | | High |
|--------------|-------------|---|------------|-----|-------|
| | Low | | Middle | | |
| Ideas | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| Organization | | | | | |
| Wording | | | | | |
| Flavor | | | | | _____ |
| Usage | | | | | |
| Punctuation | | | | | |
| Spelling | | | | | |
| Handwriting | | | | | _____ |
| | | | | | _____ |
| | | | | Sum | _____ |

Appendix B

Appendix B

Arthur M. Cohen's scoring model, 1973:

Score Sheet

| | Yes | No | |
|------------------|-----|-----|---|
| Content I. | ___ | ___ | 1. Ideas themselves are insightful. |
| | ___ | ___ | 2. Ideas are creative or original. |
| | ___ | ___ | 3. Ideas are rational or logical. |
| | ___ | ___ | 4. Ideas are expressed with clarity. |
| Organization II. | ___ | ___ | 5. There is a thesis. |
| | ___ | ___ | 6. Order of thesis idea is followed throughout the essay. |
| | ___ | ___ | 7. Thesis is adequately developed. |
| | ___ | ___ | 8. Every paragraph is relevant to the thesis. |
| | ___ | ___ | 9. Each paragraph has a controlling idea. |
| | ___ | ___ | 10. Each paragraph is developed with relevant and concrete details. |
| | ___ | ___ | 11. The details that are included are well ordered. |
| Mechanics III. | ___ | ___ | 12. There are many misspellings. |

- ___ ___ 13. There are serious punctuation errors.
- ___ ___ 14. Punctuation errors are excessive.
- ___ ___ 15. There are errors in use of verbs.
- ___ ___ 16. There are errors in use of pronouns.
- ___ ___ 17. There are errors in use of modifiers.
- ___ ___ 18. There are distracting errors in word usage.
- ___ ___ 19. The sentences are awkward.

Code No. ___

Appendix C

Appendix C

Denise Lynch's Analytic Scale for Descriptive Writing:

Writer:

Peer Evaluator:

| | Low | High | Peer Rating | Instructor's |
|-----------------------------|------------|------|-------------|--------------|
| Organization | 2 4 6 8 10 | | _____ | _____ |
| Unity of Impression | 2 4 6 8 10 | | _____ | _____ |
| Style | 2 4 6 8 10 | | _____ | _____ |
| Syntax and Grammar | 2 4 6 8 10 | | _____ | _____ |
| Usage | 1 2 3 4 5 | | _____ | _____ |
| Spelling and Punctuation | 1 2 3 4 5 | | _____ | _____ |

Scoring Guidelines

Organization:

High-- Essay has an introduction, middle, and conclusion; clear transitions; paragraphs adequately developed with descriptive detail; writer follows a route allowing for orderly progress from one detail to another; spatial relationships clear to the reader.

Low--- Essay lacks either an introduction, middle, or conclusion; weak transitions; insufficient development of paragraphs with descriptive detail; no orderly progression from one detail to another; spatial relationships confusing.

Unity of Impression:

High-- Details of subject and descriptive modifiers selected to convey a dominant impression; point of view consistent.

Low--- Details randomly selected; writer conveys no clear or consistent impression of the subject; shifting point of view.

Style:

High-- Interesting, imaginative use of language; concrete nouns, vivid adjectives, strong active verbs; occasional metaphor, simile, or allusion; tone and diction suitable to purpose and audience.

Low--- Language is trite, colorless; excessive abstractions and verbs in passive voice; no figurative language; tone and diction inconsistent or unsuitable to purpose and audience.

Syntax and Grammar:

High-- Sentences convey meaning clearly, grammatically no fragments or run-on sentences; sentences varied in structure and length.

Low--- Sentences awkward, repetitious, unvaried in structure or length; numerous grammatical errors, including run-on sentences and fragments.

Usage:

High-- Writer uses idioms properly and observes standard

usage.

Low--- Language is unidiomatic; numerous errors in usage.

Spelling and Punctuation:

High-- Free of errors

Low--- Numerous errors

Appendix D

Appendix D

Coleman's Synthesis of All Three Scoring Models, plus a few added criteria:

SCORE SHEET

I. CONTENT

PAPER NUMBER:

YES NO (CHECK)

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--------------------------------------|
| ___ | ___ | 1. Ideas themselves are insightful. |
| ___ | ___ | 2. Ideas are creative and original. |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Ideas are rational and logical. |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Ideas are expressed with clarity. |

*OVERALL SCORE: (CIRCLE)

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|--------|---|------|---|---|---|----|
| LOW | | MIDDLE | | HIGH | | | | |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

*HIGH: Writer shows skill in clearly communicating the details of the subject; selects ideas that convey a dominant impression; retains a consistent point of view; exhibits grasp of paper's rationale and purpose.

*LOW: Ideas and details are randomly selected; writer conveys no clear or consistent impression of the subject; shifting point of view; does not communicate an overall purpose.

II. ORGANIZATION

YES NO

- ___ ___ 1. There is a thesis.
- ___ ___ 2. Order of thesis idea is followed
throughout the essay.
- ___ ___ 3. Thesis is adequately developed.
- ___ ___ 4. Every paragraph is relevant to the
thesis.
- ___ ___ 5. Each paragraph has a controlling idea.
- ___ ___ 6. Each paragraph is developed with concrete
details.
- ___ ___ 7. The details that are included are well
ordered.

OVERALL SCORE:

| LOW | MIDDLE | | | | HIGH | | | |
|-----|--------|---|---|---|------|---|---|----|
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

***HIGH:** Essay has an introduction, middle, and conclusion; clear transitions; paragraphs adequately developed with descriptive detail; writer follows a route allowing for orderly progress from one detail to another.

***LOW:** Essay lacks either an introduction, middle, or conclusion; weak transitions; insufficient development of paragraphs with descriptive detail; no orderly progression from one detail

to another.

III. MECHANICS AND STYLE

- | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> | |
|------------|-----------|---|
| ___ | ___ | 1. There are many misspellings. |
| ___ | ___ | 2. There are serious punctuation errors. |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Punctuation errors are excessive. |
| ___ | ___ | 4. There are errors in use of verbs. |
| ___ | ___ | 5. There are errors in use of pronouns. |
| ___ | ___ | 6. There are errors in use of modifiers. |
| ___ | ___ | 7. There are distracting errors in word usage. |
| ___ | ___ | 8. The sentences are awkward. |
| ___ | ___ | 9. There are fragments. |
| ___ | ___ | 10. There are run-ons. |
| ___ | ___ | 11. The sentences are varied in structure and length. |
| ___ | ___ | 12. There is imaginative use of language. |
| ___ | ___ | 13. There is occasional use of metaphor, simile, or allusion. |
| ___ | ___ | 14. There is use of concrete nouns, vivid adjectives, and strong action verbs. |

OVERALL SCORE:

| LOW | | | | MIDDLE | | | | HIGH | | |
|-----|---|---|---|--------|---|---|---|------|-----|---------|
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | --- | GRAMMAR |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | --- | STYLE |

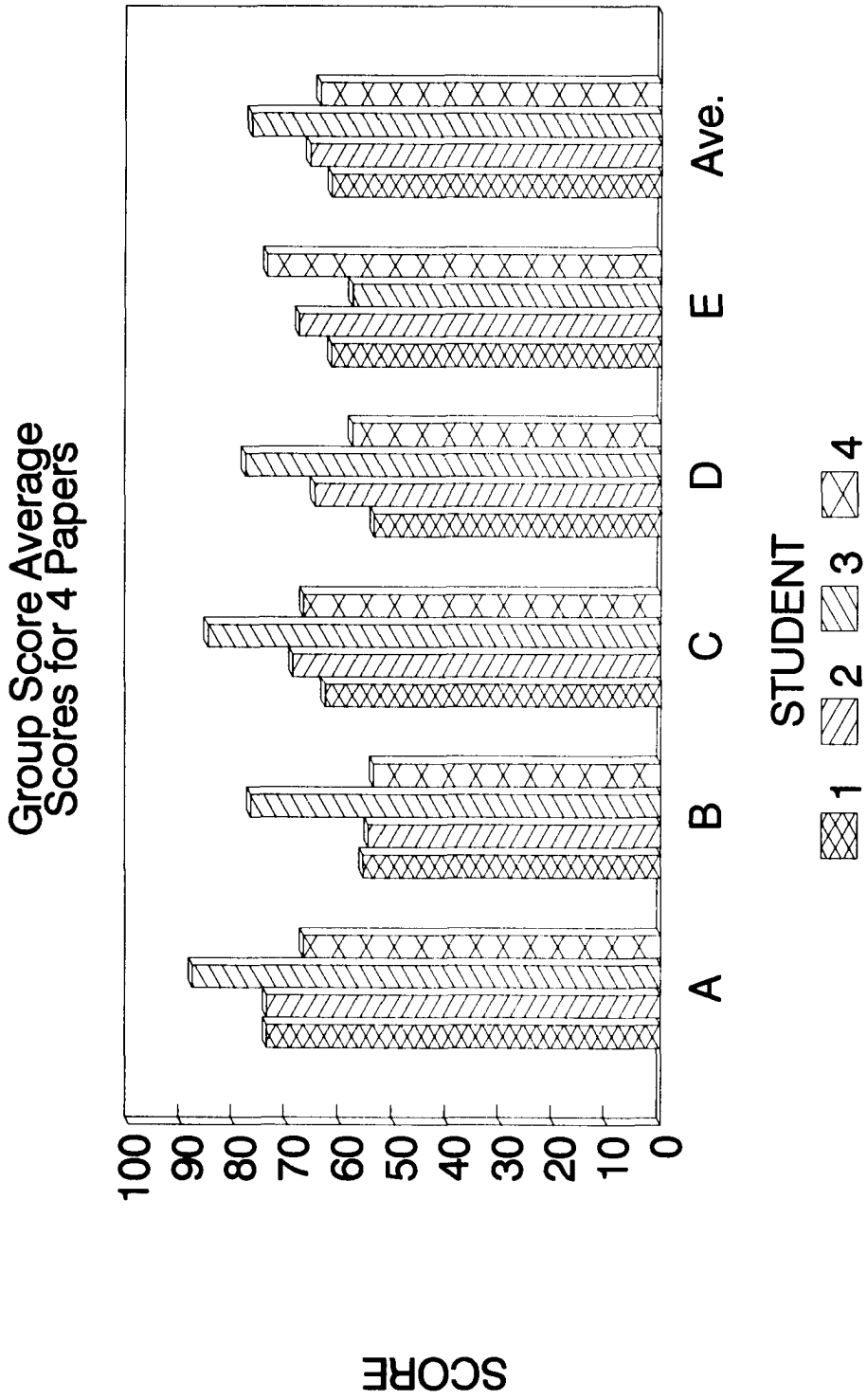
***HIGH: (GRAMMAR)** Sentences convey meaning clearly, grammatically no fragments or run-on sentences; sentences varied in length and structure.

***LOW: (GRAMMAR)** Sentences awkward, repetitious, unvaried in structure or length; numerous grammatical errors, including run-on sentences and fragments.

***HIGH: (STYLE)** Interesting, imaginative use of language; concrete nouns, vivid adjectives, strong action verbs, occasional metaphor, simile, or allusion; tone and diction suitable to purpose and audience.

***LOW: (STYLE)** Language is trite, colorless; excessive abstractions and verbs in the passive voice; no figurative language; tone and diction inconsistent or unsuitable to purpose and audience.

Appendix E



Appendix F

Appendix F--Student Papers

The order of the student papers is as follows:

Student A: 1, 6, 11, 16

Student B: 2, 7, 12, 17

Student C: 3, 8, 13, 18

Student D: 4, 9, 14, 19

Student E: 5, 10, 15, 20

Smoking

Peer pressure and misconceptions about smoking combined with the fact that smoking is generally accepted by society are the main factors behind why so many people smoke.

When I was in junior high school, two of my friends, Tamara and Stephanie, invited me to a slumber party at Stephanie's house. We waited until Stephanie's mother had fallen asleep, and then we snuck out of Stephanie's bedroom window. We went next door because a high school boy lived there, his parents were gone, and his friends were over.

When we went inside the house all the boys were smoking, and they offered each of us a cigarette. Stephanie took a cigarette from one of the boys, and then everyone looked at Tamara and me. They asked us again if we would like a cigarette. I immediately told them no. Everyone just stared at me; they could not believe that I did not want a cigarette. Tamara hesitated, but finally told them she would smoke one later. After a while, I left and went back to Stephanie's house because after I refused to smoke, my friends treated me like I was a "baby," and they acted as though they were above me.

Peer pressure has to be the number one reason that

people start smoking cigarettes. Peer pressure can be so powerful because people do not like to feel left out or alone. Also, people, who are unsure of themselves, feel that either they must go along with the crowd or they will lose their friends.

My friends thought they were more mature and sophisticated than I was because they chose to smoke. They believed that smoking made them sexy and attractive. I believe that these misconceptions about smoking have been inflated by the mass media. For example, in cigarette advertisements smokers are always portrayed as being happy, beautiful, sexy, and sophisticated. Furthermore, cigarette advertisements make young people seem older and more mature; at the same time, these advertisements make older people seem more youthful and energetic.

In reality, smoking causes wrinkles, yellow teeth, and bad breath. Most importantly, smoking is a health hazard. A warning is printed on all cigarette packages that states: "Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy." Through our advanced technology, we have also learned that second-hand smoke is dangerous to smokers and nonsmokers alike. Some smokers think that as long as they are happy they can not be hurting anyone; smokers should realize that they are not only endangering their own lives but the lives of others as well.

To complicate matters, cigarette smoking is generally

accepted by society, but it is not as socially acceptable as it used to be. Most people do not associate cigarettes with drugs; therefore, most parents do not discourage smoking as much as they discourage doing drugs. The same parents believe it is okay if their child smokes cigarettes because, in their eyes, cigarettes are not as dangerous as drugs.

Peer pressure and misconceptions about smoking combined with the fact that smoking is generally accepted by society are the main factors behind why people smoke. These factors will continue to influence people to smoke until people stop believing the advertisements, stop letting their peers pressure them into smoking, and society stops believing that smoking is acceptable.

(No Title)

The suffering, cruelty, and pain animals must endure for people to wear their fur as personal decoration is generally not realized. The trapping and ranching of creatures for their pelts is inhumane, and these practices lead to other problems as well. The use of fur items is unexcusable, for there are alternatives available.

There are several types of traps used to capture animals for their fur, including the leghold trap and neck snare. The most commonly used trap in the United States is the leghold; 22 million animals are caught with it each year. This device often crushes the creature's limb, and the animal can be trapped for up to two weeks until the trapper returns. Another equally inhumane trapping system is the neck snare. The neck snare slowly strangles the victim to death over an extended period of time. The suffering and pain these animals are subject to must be unbearable.

In fact, the torture can continue long after the animal has been trapped. According to You Can Save the Animals by America's leading veterinarian Dr. Michael W. Fox and Pamela Weintraub:

Many trapped creatures die from dehydration, starvation, or exhaustion in their traps. Others are killed by predators. If trappers find their

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quarry alive, they may break their necks (by hand or with mechanical devices), beat them to death with a blunt instrument, slam them against trees or rocks, or suffocate or drown them.

Animals do feel pain, although many people do not like to believe so. These trapped creatures do not die quickly and painlessly; instead, they die in slow agony.

Furthermore, some animals are accidentally caught in traps and discarded as trash. Pets, deer, skunk, and endangered species top the list of common "trash animals." One's own pet dog or cat could easily become a victim; likewise, endangered species such as the grizzly bear and bald eagle could become casualties. The lures are not only a danger to animals, but a danger to humans as well. If animals can be accidentally captured so easily, then what stops children or adults from falling prey to the traps?

It is generally assumed that fur which comes from animals raised on a ranch is more human than trapping; therefore, it must be okay to buy or wear. This belief is not true; fur ranching is just as cruel as trapping. It is inhumane because the minks, rabbits, foxes and beavers that are ranches are not domesticated; it would take thousands of years to truly domesticate such animals. Therefore, these creatures are as wild as those living in total freedom. Ranch animals are confined from birth in "wire-mesh cages

6-3

so tiny that they can hardly turn around". This causes claustrophobia and terror; as a result, incessant pacing, self-mutilation, and cannibalism occur.

The method in which these creatures are put to death is just as agonizing as their lives. Many have their necks broken, other are electrocuted or gassed with carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide. Gassing is not always effective; many gassed animals do not die and are revived while being skinned. It is apparent then, that ranching is not humane.

There are humane, cruelty-free alternatives to fur products. One answer is cloth items. There are several advantages of wearing cloth over fur. The most important being that cloth does not contribute to the affliction of a living creature. Also, cloth products are significantly less in cost than any fur products.

The abuse of animals must stop. The trapping and ranching of animals is cruel and painful for them, and many problems are a result of these practices. To stop the inhumane treatment, one should not buy or wear any fur item and alternatives to fur must be used.

Work Cited

Fox, Dr. Michael W., and Pamela Weintraub. You Can Save the Animals: 50 Things To Do Right Now. New York: St. Martin's, 1991.

Vegetarianism

Many people who have meat-based diets are not aware of the health risks involved and the damage caused by the meat industry. The consumption and production of meat products contribute to world hunger, environmental damage, animal suffering and abuse, wasted money, and disease. Therefore, a vegetarian diet is clearly superior to a carnivorous diet because it does not add to these problems, but helps to alleviate them.

There are several reasons why one should become a vegetarian; if the majority of people in the United States did not eat meat, then the malnutrition and starvation of human beings around the world would be drastically reduced. Some people would disagree and say that just giving up meat would not affect the number of people starving in the world, but according to Ireland Corydon in his article "New Book Bashes Beef Industry," 70% of the grain produced in the U.S. is consumed by livestock. That is one-third of the grain in the world (Rifkin, J. Beyond Beef)! If that grain were given to starving people, it would make a huge difference in the number of deaths due to malnutrition and starvation. A meat diet should be avoided to help solve the world hunger problem.

A second reason for vegetarianism is that the Farm Animal Reform Movement's pamphlet Meatfacts reports that

11-2

grazing land and crop land used for cattle feed equals millions of acres of forest land being destroyed. Also, the run-off from grazing and crop land, such as suspended and dissolved solids, organic matter nutrients and pesticides, seeps into lakes and streams, causing water pollution. Furthermore, the over grazing and "intense cultivating lead to land not being able to be used because these lands eventually turn into desert (Meatfacts). The continual abuse of our environment will eventually lead to lack of good and adequate land to grow food. It is apparent then, if the meat industry continues this destruction of the earth, it will be impossible for us to survive in the future.

More contaminates are dumped into our lakes and streams by the act of raising animals for food "than all other human activities combined." Not many people realize that a meat-based society produces this much destruction of our environment and contamination of water which directly influences our well-being. Eating meat products only contributes to this problem; a vegetable-based diet is the best way to prevent it.

Third, carnivorous diets greatly add to animal suffering and cruelty. According to Meatfacts, the abuse of farm animals starts at birth when "they are caged, crowded, deprived, medicated, mutilated, and manhandled;" the agony

11-3

only ends at the time of their death (Meatfacts). Living creatures should not have to suffer this treatment. It is cruel and inhumane to treat animals as "mere tools of production." Some may argue that only a small number of animals are treated in this manner, but the meat industry is responsible for 96% of the 6 billion animals that are abused and killed each year in the United States along (Meatfacts).

A fourth reason to avoid eating meat is that contrary to what some people believe, a switch to a vegetable-based diet would not be economically devastating for the consumer or the farmer. According to "Saving Money--the Vegetarian Way" by Brad Scott, various kinds of grains and vegetables are lower in cost and higher in nutrients than meat; thus, the vegetarian cuisine is a better value. People can save money and reduce food costs, especially in hard economic times, by serving meatless meals. As well as being a good value to consumers, farmers can also benefit.

In Lucy Moll's article "Beans Mean Cash," she explains how farmers have recently learned how big of a business soybeans can be and how much money can be generated from them. There is a greater demand for soybeans and soybean products than ever before, not only in the U.S., but other countries also (Moll). More farmers are realizing this, are growing more soybeans, and are profiting from them.

The fifth and most important reason to abstain from

11-4

eating meat products is the overall quality of our health. In his book Inhumane Society, Dr. Michael W. Fox states that many health problems arise from the consumption of meat products. These health problems include food poisoning, allergies, arteriosclerosis, and various types of cancer. It is sad that people suffer these health problems when they could have been avoided by not eating meat.

Drugs have to be given to animals for their health and productivity because of their living conditions. According to "Dangers of Beef and Dairy Products" by Dr. James Balch, hormones are routinely fed to cattle so they will grow faster. When this meat is eaten by humans it still contains some of the hormones which affect people in the following ways: hot flashes, painful menses, breast lumps, cancer of the uterus and breast in females, premature aging, and impotence in males. Not only are hormones in meat, but many preservatives such as nitrites are added to hide the discoloration of meat caused by age (Balch). These preservatives have been known to cause cancer and endanger the health of all who eat meat.

Also, animals that are diseased are often overlooked or ignored by USDA inspectors according to the article "New Book Bashes Beef Industry" by Ireland Corydon. More alarming is the following from "Dangers of Beef and Dairy Products":

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"If an animal has cancer or a tumor, that part of the animal will be cut away, leaving the rest of the body to be sold as meat. Even worse, the diseased area will be incorporated into mixed meats such as hot dogs, or luncheon meats, and labeled as parts" (2).

The practice of cutting away diseased parts of the animal's body and then using the rest of the body as food is unsafe and risky; cancer can easily spread from one part of the body to another. Furthermore, using the excised parts for mixed meats should never be permitted under any circumstances. These practices pose a great health risk to consumers. The only way to totally avoid eating diseased meat is to avoid eating meat altogether!

When all people become aware of the negative effects of a carnivorous diet, perhaps more people will turn to vegetarianism as an alternative. A vegetable-based diet helps solve the world hunger problem, is better for our environment, does not promote animal suffering or cruelty, saves consumers money, gives farmers an economic boost, and prevents many diseases and disorders. Clearly, a meatless diet is the most desirable for the well-being and survival of all living creatures and the planet Earth.

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Mayella Ewell and Scout Finch

In Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, it is apparent that Mayella Ewell and Scout Finch are complete opposites. They have nothing in common except the fact that they both lack mothers. However, Mayella and Scout differ in all other aspects, family life, lifestyle, attitudes and values.

Mayella Ewell's family life is far from happy. Mayella's father does not care much for her; evident by the way he treats her. She is abused by him and has to act as a mother to her seven younger brothers and sisters (182-183). It is clear then that Mayella does not have a very good family life.

The lifestyle of the Ewell's is just as bad as their family life. According to Atticus, "they were people but they lived like animals" (30). For example, the Ewell family gets their water from the spring that runs out of the dump near their house (183). This contaminated water is used for drinking as well as bathing, although the Ewell's rarely bathe. In addition, Mayella does not attend school, but instead stays home because "Papa needed them at home" (183). Her father is so lazy he makes his children do his work for him. Mayella's family is like no other in Maycomb, and it is certainly not pleasant. Furthermore, Mayella does not have many morals or values, if any at all. For instance, during the trial Mayella lies under oath (180).

Very few people in Maycomb believe anything she says because of her family's reputation for being dishonest (250). This says that Mayella is not truthful and she does not know right from wrong.

Scout Finch's family life is quite different from Mayella's; Scout's family truly cares about her. Scout's family shows their love for her in many ways. For instance, Atticus always takes the time to her problems and explain things like prejudice to her (108). Also, although Scout has no mother, she is not expected to run the household like Mayella does. Calpurnia and Aunt Alexandra are present to take care of all the Motherly duties. In a way, they fill in for Scout's missing mother and help contribute to a good family life. A good family, like Scout's, does these things; listen to each others problems and takes the time to explain things to each other.

Furthermore, Scout's lifestyle differs significantly from Mayella's. Unlike Mayella, Scout attends school regularly (31). Scout goes to school because she wants to learn. Also, her family does not have much money, but they do not "lie like animals" (226). Scout's family attends church regularly, eats dinner together, and sends the children to school.

Finally, Scout is a child who has good values and a good attitude towards life. For example, she believes that

16-3

"there's just one kind of folks, Folks" (227). This says that Scout does not hold a person's skin color or family background against them; she treats everyone the same way.

The differences between Mayella and Scout are easily recognized. Everything that is positive about Scout, her lifestyle, and family is the opposite for Mayella, her lifestyle, and family. Therefore, Scout lives a happy life, while Mayella lives a hard one.

Work Cited

Lee, Harper, To Kill A Mockingbird, 1960. New York:
Warner, 1982.

Life in the 30's

Life seems much simpler then. Everyone minds their own business, but still have time to help out one another. Socializing is centered around the family as well as the church, and high income is paying cash for a car. This is life, in a small town in the 1930's, as pictured by Harper Lee in To Kill a Mockingbird.

Life in Maycomb County is fairly typical of Southern society during the time of the Great Depression. Most people work at whatever jobs they can get or continue in the family business. There are government jobs available (for the hard to employ), building roads and _____ that even the family bread while maintaining the bread winner's dignity. Very few people are actually living on welfare. Under some circumstances, this is considered a "necessary, temporary condition," but societys in general, considers such people as lazy, good for nothing ne'er do well's. Bob Ewell is Maycomb's welfare person, being too lazy to even hold down a job with the W.P.A. (248) Few people have cash to pay for services they receive and they barter as payment. Doctors, and other such professionalists, are paid in produce or dairy products or chickens, sometimes with a load of wood cut for the fireplace or a special handcraft. Since everyone suffers the same, there is no shame at all attached to this method of payment.

There are various "levels" of society, each level tending to socialize with others of the same level. The church congregation, even though from all _____, is one social level. Most levels are defined by ancestors' accomplishments and reputations combined with the current generations' standard of living. (130) Those who own and work their land, which is most of Maycomb County, are as well respected as the professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers) who live inside the city. Each neighborhood, or area of town, is a sort of level with each household being the same "type" of people. The local school is supported by the entire county and each program or play is well attended by the community. Other than those community efforts, socializing with someone from a "lower" class just is not done. Bad manners which results in unnecessary and deliberate rudeness to those less fortunate is not tolerated. People are more conscious of other's feelings and more respectful of their privacy.

Most "social" functions or parties are family get-togethers. Holidays, weddings and funerals are occasions for relatives to travel great distances to participate and visit and get reacquainted with their kin. Each household is like a small kingdom in that no one will interfere with how the house is run or the children we raised, or punished, as long as there is no great physical harm being done or no

2-3

laws being flagrantly violated. Everyone knows, or knows of, everyone else, but no one interferes with another's business.

Different types of people and their lifestyles, as shown in To Kill a Mockingbird, can be found in any small rural town in the nation during this time period. Money is tight but families are close to each other and people really care about their neighbors. This really is a more simple time.

Work Cited

Lee, Harper, To Kill a Mockingbird. 1960. New York:
Warner Books, 1982.

To Be Or Not To Be - The Real Question

" ...the Constitution of the United States values the convenience, whim, or caprice of the pregnant woman more than the life or potential life of the fetus; the Constitution, therefore, guarantees the right to an abortion..." (S.Ct. 762). This Supreme Court decision, commonly known as Roe vs. Wade, paved the way for nationwide legalized abortion (Thompson 82). In 1973, the Supreme Court decided that women had a constitutional right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. It is no longer a question of the mother's life being in jeopardy, but now, the life of the fetus, the unborn child, is the one at risk. Abortion is wholesale murder, with no fines or penalties, allowed by the highest court in this country.

At least the legalizing of abortion permits those women who choose it to be treated by a trained professional in a clean, clinical setting, no more back rooms, dark alleys or dirty instruments and coat hangers. Few women fear death as the result of having an abortion in these modern times. If something does go wrong, they can seek the services of another physician to heal them: to stop the bleeding, cure the infection. However, who heals the fetus? Doctors who have sworn an oath to protect life by any means, murder babies in the process of safeguarding a woman's constitutional right. There are no life-saving drugs for

these children. They are sent to research labs in specimen jars. Aborted fetuses have opened up tissue research for diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and diabetes (Clift 31). These babies do not have to worry about getting these diseases, anyway. These babies are dead.

Various techniques are used to perform abortions. The gestational age of the fetus and the general health of the mother must be taken into consideration. The most common method with the fewest complications is suction dilation and curettage. This can be performed at any time after conception until around sixteen weeks of pregnancy. Many doctors who perform abortions can do this procedure in their offices. A local anesthetic, a tranquilizer, a special "vacuum cleaner", and a trash can are all that is needed. A life goes down the tubes before it even gets a chance to begin. Another choice is RU-486, a pill which is given during the first seven weeks of pregnancy to force the body to abort the fetus (Licari A1). How sad that what the baby first depends on for its source of life, the mother, ultimately rejects it.

Regardless of the method of termination which is chosen, more than physical health is affected during and after an abortion. At the moment of conception, a woman's body signals for the massive production of hormones in preparation for the pregnancy. These hormones have a

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tremendous impact on a woman's emotional state. When a pregnancy is forcibly terminated, even though by her own choice, major changes and adjustments are made. Taking the pill (RU-486), as pointed out by Barbara Lyons, allows her "to potentially view a fully formed unborn baby being expelled. That could cause severe psychological trauma" (qtd. in Licari). In 1987, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, an out-spoken anti-abortionist, was told to examine the physical and psychological dangers of abortion to the mother. He reported a low risk physically and lack of proof of psychological disturbance (Thompson 82). No one stopped to think about the dangers happening to the baby.

In more recent years, anti-abortionists have become known as pro-lifers. Those who support the Roe vs. Wade decision are known as pro-choice. Many organizations have developed programs to assist the pregnant women who have chosen to not have abortions. They have found it is not uncommon for a woman to feel great sorrow, anxiety, rage; to have nightmares and suicidal impulses; experience emotional pain, loss, depression, and feel isolated (Troubled...). Why is she suffering now? It was her choice. The baby had no choice. The baby is not feeling any of those things. The baby is feeling nothing. She killed it, by choice, and the baby is dead.

There are two alternatives to abortion. One is for the

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mother to keep her child and raise it herself. There are organizations and social programs to help her. The birth mother may also offer her child for adoption to couples who cannot have children of their own. These couples often spend years on waiting lists before a child can be found. Sometimes they wait in vain: "their" baby ended up in a research lab or a doctor's trash can.

Another alternative to abortion is to prevent the pregnancy from happening in the first place. There are many methods of birth control on the market. Some do not require a prescription from a physician and can be purchased by minors. Educating teenagers (and adults alike) as to the proper use of these methods should greatly reduce the number of "unwanted" pregnancies. The surest way to prevent pregnancy, and therefore prevent abortion, is to not engage in sexual activities. While none of the "bought" methods are guaranteed one hundred percent effective, restricting intercourse to the marriage bed, as originally intended by God, instead of having the "free sex" attitude of today's society, should reduce the desire for abortion to an absolute minimum. Acting responsibly is not beyond the ability of a minor and is a greatly admired trait in an adult.

There are two preventatives of abortion. In June of 1990, Ohio made their first small step. They upheld a law

which requires a female under the age of eighteen to notify at least one parent of the intent to abort. That makes a total of thirty-eight states with similar such laws on their books. Twenty-two of those states do not enforce that law for "constitutional reasons" (Henderson d12). The real need is to repeal the law which legalized abortions in the first place. The National Right to Life Committee is a pro-life organization dedicated to this end. They petition congressmen and support those politicians who are campaigning on a pro-life platform. While repealing this law will not totally prevent abortions from being done, stiff penalties will help reduce the number of those willing to perform them.

Today's society murders hundreds of innocent children every day. There are no penalties, fines, or jail sentences. Only the children are penalized. Only the children are sentenced. They pay society's dues with their lives - their sentence is death. It is time to make a change, to make a difference, to save the children. It is time for Life----a beautiful choice!

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The Right to Bear Arms

Ever since the second amendment of the United States was added to the constitution, there has been an understanding for American citizens to have the right to own a firearm of some kind. Now that is about to change. These crooked politicians of the modern day world believe this right should be revoked. They use accidental shootings, terrorist acts, and accidents with children as sufficient evidence to ban firearms. Assume the government did make firearms illegal for the public to own. A year later a burglar breaks in you house and starts taking everything you own. The chance of him carrying a firearm are ninety-six out of one hundred. Your wife is lying beside you crying and telling you to do something about it. But you know you cannot, because you have nothing to protect yourself with. The only thing you can do is lay there and regret not fighting against the law banning firearms. In today's society, it seems the safest thing to do is keep firearms legal, as it was intended by the second amendment.

The largest organization whose main purpose is to fight for the right to own firearms is the National Rifle Association. The NRA consists of about two point eight million members who will constantly send letters to any legislator who is in support of gun control. The NRA not only deals with the legal issues of firearm rights, but also

with the education and safety of firearms. It was 1930 when the NRA's emphasis first shifted to prevention of gun control. They were seriously hampered in their efforts due to the political assassinations in the 60's which shocked the world. The major point that the NRA uses to fight gun control is the violation of the second amendment. Roger Koopman, a member of the NRA, points out that if Americans accept the way politicians are denying our firearm rights, "we have thrown in the towel and torn apart our Constitution."

On the other hand, supporters of government gun control quote statistics of gun violence as a valid reason to pass these laws. They would cause to be prosecuted the victims of gang violence who use firearms for protection such as Bernard Getz, the subway shooter. Another advancement for control was the ban on the import of nine different assault weapons. It was a one vote victory in the Senate, but with about seventy percent public support. So, now, are all the owners of these type weapons terrorists, drug dealers, and members of organized crime? The latest step to control firearms is called the Brady bill.

This law requires a seven day wait to obtain a legal permit to own a weapon. This law is an attempt to keep firearms away from persons with felony convictions. Yeah, right.

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The right to bear arms, as guaranteed by the second amendment, was originally intended for the community Militia. In today's world, the head of the house is the home's militia, protecting the state of freedom for those who live there from becoming victims of crime. The idea, as can be interpreted from the statements of gun control supporters, that a common, ordinary citizen will suddenly become a criminally violent person, simply by owning a firearm, is absurd.

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Face It and Decide

Every day is full of decisions, some minor and some major. Some decisions have long-range effects that we thought were short range when we made them. Decisions should always be made after getting your priorities straight. But humans do not always think through and put their priorities in proper perspective.

Some decisions are so simple that people do not realize they are actually making a decision. Every day a person puts on clothes, he is making a decision on what to wear and how to wear it without actually thinking about it. When someone gets hungry they do not sit around and try to decide if they should eat or not, they just find something to eat and start eating. When a person goes to school or work he does not have to decide every day which route to take to get there. These decisions are made so easily that they almost seem to be made in the unconscious. It is usually a matter of taste and preference that affect these kinds of decisions.

Other decisions are not that simple as many depend on the natural aptitude of a person. A person will not decide to do something if he does not feel he is capable of doing it before he begins. Attitude also plays a big part in decision making. If someone has a good attitude about what he decides to do, he will more than likely excell in that

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area rather than deciding to do something he does not have a good attitude about. A person's family may also affect how a person decides on what to do. When someone picks a religion, he usually stays with the religion his family practices. It is easy to see that a person's family and background have a lot to do with that person's decision making process. Deciding on a college major requires much thought and common sense. A person will not major in something that he is not interested in, but something that excites him.

Another decision that is made that people do not realize they make is making no decision at all. Sometimes deciding to not take sides or obtain a different point of view is a wise decision, sometimes known as a passive decision.

One of the hardest choices that I have had to make is deciding on whether or not I should go on a graduation trip to Florida with my friends.

Giving money on graduation has become a family tradition. How I spent the money was up to me. I could spend it on anything I wanted. I considered spending it on my truck, or my room, or clothes, or a blow-out graduation trip to Florida. One major topic of conversation with my friends was all the improvements we could do to our vehicles, if we only had enough money. My goal was to put

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chrome on the side of my truck and get some new tires.

I also had visions of redecorating my bedroom. I have been looking at the same furniture and carpet in my room ever since I can remember. My Dad had already vetoed the waterbed, but that still left a lot of other things I could change. And my wardrobe could always use a few more items of the latest fashion.

My thoughts kept turning to the graduation trip, a main topic of conversation among my friends. We needed to rest, a break, some time to get away from all responsibilities for a while. Now was our time for sand and sun, bikinis and booze.

Graduation day came, sudden wealth was mine, and decision time was at hand. Being realistic about the actual cost of all the things I wanted, there was no way I could do everything. I chose to go to Florida.

Each morning when I wake up and see the same old ugly ceiling fan, roll out of that old, lumpy mattress and step on that same old ugly red carpet, it takes some effort to appreciate that trip to Florida. A main point of conversation with my friends is still the improvements we could make to our vehicles if we only had enough money. We each had decisions to make.

I chose to do something to give me memories to last a lifetime.

Deforestation

The destruction of tropical forests has long been a source of alarm to ecologists and environmental activist; and it is now becoming an increasing public concern in many of the industrialized nations. Tropical forests are disappearing at a rate of tens of thousands of square miles per year (Repetto 36). At this present rate, The Economist predicts that by the year 2000 the tropical forests will be largely destroyed. The tropical forest, which once covered 10 percent of the earth's land surface, has already been reduced by about a third (25). As Scientific American reports, the deforestation is destroying valuable natural resources throughout much of the developing world (36). This trend must be stopped to ensure the restoration of tropical forests and the life the maintain.

Tropical forest maintance of life is in jeopardy. The Economist reports that biologists estimate 10,000 species are being lost every year, never to be replaced (25). As BioScience reports, the tropics contain around half of the world's species, many restricted to tiny habitats (827).

No only is it driving many animal species into extinction, but also many plant species. The economic loss of this destruction is beyond comprehension. The Economist reports that the tropical forests contain a vast gene bank of undiscovered wealth in the form of fruits, crops, and

medicines. Even today one fourth of the prescription drugs used in the United States are derived from tropical forest plants (25). Professor Edward Wilson of Harvard University points out that "in previous mass extinctions most of the plant diversity survived: now for the first time, it is being mostly destroyed." Mr. Norman Meyers also associated with Harvard University predicts that the loss of the tropical forests will cause "the greatest single setback of life's abundance and diversity since the first flickerings of life almost 4 billion years ago" (25). Destruction of life is one of the major concerns to mankind in the deforestation of the tropics, but it is not the only one.

Not only threatening animals and plant, deforestation is a direct result of soil erosion and flooding in local areas. Worldwide it has a significant affect on the natural systems of the earth. Locally, Robert Repetto reports that the soil of cleared forests are damaged by heavy equipment, and when the soil is exposed to heavy tropical rains, it can quickly erode or at least lose a percentage of its valuable nutrients. Studies in Ghana showed that the elimination of a part of their tropical forest raised soil-erosion rates from less than a ton to more than 100 tons per hectare per year. It also has a nutrient loss of 40 percent (38). Worldwide, tropical forests absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. As the disappearance of tropical forest

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continues, the build-up of carbon dioxide becomes greater. Scientific American reports that the release of carbon dioxide is estimated to account for 15 to 30 percent of the global carbon dioxide emissions. This in turn contributes substantially to the build up of greenhouse gases (36).

Deforestation needs to be stopped, or at least brought under control in order to ensure economic and environmental stability. The main cause of deforestation can be related directly to loggers. The Economist reports that most of the loggers are granted only short-term logging contracts, and their opportunity to cut down trees is temporary. Therefore they often do not get the benefits of regenerating the forests. The loggers do not take time to plant trees where they took trees (57). Scientific American also reports that loggers destroy much more timber that they take out. If loggers extract 10 percent of the timber they destroy at least half of the remaining trees, including immature trees and trees of less desirable varieties (37). As The Economist states, responsible logging, where timber is selectively and carefully extracted at intervals of 25 years or more, makes economic and ecological sense (26).

These irresponsible actions of loggers must be stopped, but as Scientific American reports, tropical governments are not willing to sacrifice the revenue they get from the timber. Understandably the tropical governments see no

point to invest in the management of the forests. Even if the government were willing, they do not have the revenue to stand by their management practices (39). As BioScience reports, local revenue gains from deforestation help the economy. The worlds three largest exporters, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines exported approximately three billion dollars worth of timber during the 1980s. With money as an incentive, it is understandable why tropical countries oppose deforestation restrictions (828).

With many of the tropical countries against the involvement of industrialized nations, it is hard to come up with a solution to deforestation. It is reasonable to say that the tropical countries should not have to shoulder all the burden. If tropical trees are to be extracted for global use, the rich countries need to compensate the owners for that. Scientific American suggests that tropical countries estimate the entire resource value of their timber, except for the cost of labor, and charge high enough royalties and taxes to loggers to get the estimated value out of the trees. With the money they can then impose laws and management of reforestation (38). Another suggested solution to deforestation is reported in The Economist. Developed countries with their own logging industries, such as Sweden and Canada, might advise tropical countries on how to use the trees more effectively. In Sweden and Canada

they use 98 percent of the tree compared to tropical countries, who on an average use only 40 percent of the total tree (36). Another solution already in effect is reported in the BioScience; it is the Tropical Forest Action Plan. This plan has many members led by the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Bank. Its goal is to bring money from developed nations and nongovernmental organizations and use it to improve tropical countries. Uses of money include reforestation, fuelwood production, and nature conservation (829). But for this plan to work, it must have support from government and continued financial backing. These are only a few of the many potential solutions. In order for any of them to work they must have a backing of concerned people, ready to sacrifice time and money to the cause.

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Animal Rights Groups in the Livestock Industry

Today, 3 percent of the American population produces the food we consume. America itself has turned into an urban nation, and it has set the stage for the animal rights movement. There are now more than 7,000 animal rights groups in the U.S., and their goal is to radically change livestock practices (Barber 80). With combined assets of about \$50,000,000, they are now becoming a force to be reckoned with. According to Richard Whitaker, a Las Vegas FBI agent, "Any livestock operator is a potential target for militant animal rights groups, who are determined to stop human consumption and use of livestock" (Barber 83). Unfortunately, many of the supporters of these organizations are well-meaning people. But, their perception of animals is based on Walt Disney movies, a small pet, or a friends' belief, instead of actually having first-hand experience with the livestock industry. These groups are potentially dangerous to farmers and must be educated to the actual practices of animal husbandry.

Several incidents provoked by animal rights organizations have already affected the livestock industry. Last year in Sweden, a federal law was put into affect that regulated animal production practices, such as the practice of artificial insemination. It had a backing of people that thought only natural breeding should be allowed, and it

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violated an animals' right to do otherwise (Barber 80). Another incident was the burning of the Dixon, California Auction Market. A group named Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM) was responsible for the fire. They burned it saying that they didn't want the livestock auctioned off for meat consumption. In Washington D.C., three years ago, 24 thousand people gathered to demand equal rights for animals. The rightests believe a child is no more important than an animal, and God dosen't want any animal to suffer for any reason (AIF10). Obviously, these are extreme activists, and the common righest would not go to such lengths. But even so, these people must be stopped from seriously damaging, or even eliminating the livestock industry. One way is to educate them, about the farmer and his practices.

There are many myths that animal rights activists share, but they have no truth to them. Many of these myths pertain to the farmer and his husbandry practices. One common myth many righest believe is that farming in the U.S. is controlled by large corporations, which only care about the profits, not the welfare of the animal. The truth is, 87% of the farms in the U.S. are owned by caring individuals or a married couple. Another myth that is commonly used by the righest is that animals are raised in confined, overcrowded, dark, unventialated areas. The fact is, most animals are housed in barns or sheds to protect

them from disease and bad weather. Modern animal housing is warm, well-lit, and clean. It is designed to help the farmer provide the best care for his animals. One other myth that needs to be addressed is that animals are routinely mutilated by unnecessary dehorning, and castration. Actually, dehorning and castration are done to prevent animals harming other animals. Without horns animals are less likely to stab or poke other animals; and castration is done to prevent fighting among bulls, and to ensure good meat quality.

One of the most important things to remember about farmers, when confronted with these myths, is that the farmers raise animals because they enjoy doing it. They are responsible for the welfare of the animals, and the farmers have the greatest at stake, because their livelihood depends on the production and health of the livestock he or she is raising. The best care of animals makes economic as well as moral sense. The better the animals are cared for, the lower the production costs, and in the end, the returns for the farmer are greater.

Many animal activists are not aware that the farmer provides people with more than just food. They do not stop and think of the affects that the elimination of the livestock industry would have. Not only do animals help the medical field in research, but in many other aspects as

well. Livestock is responsible for helping to cure many allergies which is extracted from the adrenal glands. From the pancreas of cattle and swine we get life-saving insulin. Parts of the heart from swine has been used in heart-transplant surgery. Also, skin from animals has been used to replace human skin. These are only a few of the many by-products that the ordinary person would not think comes from animals. Without these by-products today, many people would be suffering.

The production methods currently being used by farmers have been developed over the decades by qualified veterinarians and farmers. Animal welfare is a farmers' constant job; and it requires commitment and devotion to animals on a daily, hands-on-basis. Only qualified people with hands-on experience should be allowed to judge the husbandry practices of the livestock industry.

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To Drug Test or Not to Drug Test

Many companies and businesses are becoming aware of workplace alcohol and other drug problems. In 1991 an American Management Association survey showed that 85% of the companies had established some sort of drug-abuse policy (Gust, Walsh 153). Many companies are in the process of identifying their options to determine the best course of action. One of the decisions they will face is whether or not to drug test.

Drug testing is not a mandatory or universal response to drug problems in the workplace (OHS 319). A recent American Management Association survey of 1,000 companies indicated that 79% of the respondents do not test employees. Of the companies which do not have drug testing policies the most frequently cited reasons were privacy and ethical questions, inaccuracy of tests, and the negative impact on employee morale (319).

Drug testing for some companies is a way of dealing with drugs in the workplace. But drug testing is a tool to help deal with severe drug problems, it is not a complete drug abuse program. It is a controversial method which requires high levels of expertise and has liabilities and questions (314). The issue that it is a violation of personal privacy rights, and that the fourth amendment protects against unreasonable search and seizure has also

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entered the picture. The testing itself also has many problems. There is a percentage of error involved, which happens in all testing techniques, even under the best of conditions. It also does not compensate for more than 200 legal over-the-counter drugs. People who take these legal drugs often get positive test results back which creates many problems. There is also the chance of cheating on the tests. Tests can be beaten by providing a false sample, diluting the sample, or altering the pH of the sample. There are also studies that indicate there are a significant number of false findings reported by labs involved in industrial urine testing. Accuracy can also be affected by sample mishandling, contamination, faulty equipment, or a technician's error (322).

There are many ways to deal with drugs in the workplace other than drug testing. Drug Education Programs are one of the more popular ways. The objective of drug education is to prevent drug problems by educating employees of the risks, and to provide information so employees can intervene with their own drug problem (Gust, Walsh 228). Another way to deal with drugs in the workplace is through the Employee Assistance Program. EAP's are considered to be the single most affective way to deal with personnel problems that affect the workplace. Survey's show that in a well planned EAP every dollar invested can save three dollars through

education and prevention efforts (OHS 316).

There are two general categories of drug testing programs. The most common type of drug screening is pre-employment screening. The object of pre-employment screening is obvious. The company hiring is trying to hire a drug free worker (318). Random drug testing is the second type of drug testing programs. This is when employees are asked to take the test without prior notice. This type of testing has generated the most controversy. Most employees feel it is intruding into their private lives and can create a climate of distrust and hostility toward the employer (319).

Fighting drug abuse should not raise controversy, it ensures workplace safety, productivity and improves the workers health. Workplace rules should prohibit possession and use of drugs and alcohol on the job. Every workplace should have an ongoing program to prevent and to help drug abuse in the workplace. To test or not to test? That is the question facing many companies today.

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"Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight:

In Walker Percy's essay, Percy introduces us to three types of traveling. First is the "loss of the creature". This traveler tours to say they've been there, to take pictures, and buy souvenirs. Percy states that those who take pictures and buy souvenirs will create a preconception for other potential travelers. Second is the "recapturing of the creature". Percy states that this is a traveler that has no preconception of what is to come. He also says that this traveler will bet off the beaten track and discover something new, only to be special to him (pg. 464). Third is the "capturing of the creature". This experience is unique because the first person to discover something is said to be the only one to actually capture the creature. In Walker Percy's eyes, Clifford Geertz trip to Bali was an unsuccessful attempt to capture the creature.

To many, Geertz's trip would seem successful. He got closer to the Balinese people than any other anthropologist had done before him. But to Percy, an anthropologist can not go into someone else's culture and capture the creature. Geertz tells us at the beginning of the essay that he read all the material on Bali, and the Balinese people, including other anthropologist's works. In Percy's eyes this creates a preconception for Geertz, and to Percy anyone who has a preconception cannot capture the creature, rather they lose

it. Like in Percy's essay, the ranger of the canyon (pg. 464). Everyday the ranger looks at the canyon, but never really sees it for what it is. Percy explains that he sees it so often that the picture is distorted. To Percy, Geertz's view is also distorted because he looks at culture, and peoples way of life everyday, both Geertz and the ranger have a preconception of what is to come.

Within the first few days of Geertz's arrival to Bali, many things happened to which Percy would frown upon. Before Geertz arrived he arranged with the provincial government to live in an extended family compound (pg. 272). Percy would view this as a negative, he would rather have seen Geertz live with and become like the other Balinese people. To make it a true experience he could have built his own house. Instead, he decided to take the luxuries of the government house. Like the couple in Percy's essay that found the village in Mexico, they lived and ate with the Indians, and in this aspect had an original experience (pg. 467). Also, upon Geertz's arrival he noticed he was being treated "like a gust of wind" (pg. 273). The Balinese seemed to look right past him. He writes that no one greeted him, and if he approached anyone they would move away to avoid speaking to him (pg. 273). Percy would view this as a loss. Again like the couple in Mexico, he was always apprehensive. In their case it was because they were

afraid of the authenticity of the village. In Geertz's case he was apprehensive to talk and learn from the people of Bali. Percy would say that Geertz couldn't have a real experience if he was always wondering how to communicate with the Balinese.

During the next few days Geertz went to his first Balinese cockfight. He went merely as an observer, but he ended up as part of the crowd. As Geertz and his wife were observing the police interrupted the fight. As a reaction, the whole mass of Balinese people took off for any hiding place they could find. Geertz and his wife were only steps behind them, but as the essay tells us, it was not a reaction to run (pg. 274). As any good anthropologist would do he took advantage of the situation. Geertz knew that to be accepted within the Balinese culture, he must be one of them. He and his wife ran but it was not natural and he planned it before actually running. Percy would view this as a negative. Percy states that in order to capture the creature one must not plan. Like the man and his family from Boston who traveled to the Grand Canyon. He plans his vacation through the travel bureau. Percy says that what he's done is one way not to see the Grand Canyon, much less capture the creature (pg. 462-463). In Walker Percy's essay "The Loss of the Creature", Percy argues that people have trouble seeing and understanding the things around them

(pg. 755). In Geertz essay "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", Geertz believes he has gotten a closer look at the Balinese culture than any other person in his field.

Percy says that an expert cannot capture the creature, because he goes in knowing what to expect. Within Geertz's essay there is a lot of preconception about what is to come, and alot of planning on his part. Both in Percy's eyes are not a step in capturing the creature, rather it is evidence of him lossing the creature.

Distant Identites

Alexandra and Atticus are both powerful and important characters in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Molkingbird." They each represent two different ways of teaching the children, Scout and Jem, on how to view other people. Alexandra and Atticus, having been raised together, now lead two different lives with different moral values and ideas toward other people.

Alexandra feels that there should be higher standards set for Scout and Jem on friends and their family heritage. She stands by her family name and thinks of it as being of a noble background and everyone in the family is flawless, because they are kin. She puts aside the family problems and looks only upon the great achievements. It is shown when Alexandra mentions of a book, written by their cousin Joshau, to Scout and Jem. She impresses upon them that he "was a beautiful character," but they only knew of him as being "the Cousin Joshau who was locked up for so long!"

(135) Alexandra becomes raged at the idea of them knowing only the bad characteristics and thinks that they have been given a bad family impression. She is also outraged by the fact that Atticus does not set more strict standards to who Scout and Jem assoicate with in their everyday life. She does not like Scout being friendly with Walter Cunningham, because he is of a lower class. Alexandra refuses their

friendship on the facts that Walter is not of a good family background and states that "he is trash" (227) and has bad habits that she does not want Scout picking up. Alexandra's impression of trash is the posterity of a family background. This is a major difference in Alexandra's and Atticus's standards of people.

Atticus has a different outlook on life than Alexandra. He knows the standards that should be set for his children, but also believes in teaching his own morals. He wants his children to be raised knowing the truth about people even if it is of their own kin, which differs from Alexandra's theory. Atticus was once quoted saying, "you can choose your friends but you sho' can't choose your family" (227). This is why he told Scout and Jem about the true Joshua and his deranged life at college. Joshua may have written a book, but it does not cover up for his preposterous acts. Atticus emphasizes the truth on his children and in return he speaks only of the truth to them. If Joshua was not kin and represented this same behavior as a friend, Alexandra would have considered him to be trash also. Atticus does not because he has an entirely different meaning to the word "trash." His idea of trash is a white man that takes advantage of a blackman, "no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from" (223). Being different or of a lower class is not considered trash to

Atticus. He instead looks deeper into a person and finds their inner being and then determines who is trash or not. Atticus represents a more sophisticated character than Alexandra and it is easily distinguished by Scout and Jem.

Although, Alexandra and Atticus have been raised under the same conditions they live two very different lives. Having different values toward family breeding and different ideas of the right or wrong people to associate with, they still express their oppositions toward each others views while also realizing the others standpoint.

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The Laws Rough Arm

Imagine being pulled over by a police officer for speeding, but instead of the officer simply writing you a ticket he asks you to step from the car and begins to treat you abusively. This is a growing problem in America that should concern all of us, because you never know if you are going to be the next victim of an abusive act by a police officer. The impropriety problem among police officers can be blamed on issues such as racism, departmental attitudes, and pressures of interacting with criminals.

The issue of police prejudice towards minorities has become increasingly more evident. This can be seen in Bill Turque's article that states: A "squad-car computer message established the racial slurs heard in radio transmissions...where officers refer to blacks as 'monkeys' and gays as 'bun boys'" (22). Police officers making comments such as these show that they are against certain minorities. Circumstances involved in police work such as dealing with these minorities should not invoke their criticisms but instead be a neutral force helping with their problems. A racist police force is one that the public does not need because officers are more likely to perceive situations with minority figures to be more dangerous than those without. This was probably the case in the Nashville, Tennessee shooting of a mentally impaired black woman named

Jaque Brooks. Anne Paine stated that, "Brooks was shot four times in the front of her home" (1) at close range when she approached an officers police cruiser. Although she was carrying a knife, witness say that she made no gesture to strike at the officer. This incident more than likely would not have happened if the victim had not been black and a resident of a predominantly black neighborhood. The elimination of racist police officers would help cure the problems dealing with minority related incidents.

The problem of racism being present in police forces should not be blamed on police officers alone. The attitudes of high ranking management and the way departmental policies are carried out are the reasons behind the problem. Ted Gest illustrates the management side of the problem when he writes, "In the L.A.P.D.'s case, the racist remarks and laughter of the cops who beat Rodney King," a black motorist who was beaten by cops last march, "suggests that Police Chief Daryl Gates history of derogatory remarks about minorities created an open season atmosphere among officers who work the city's dangerous night beat" (26). Statements such as these indicate that management is responsible for the actions of lower ranking police officers. Changes in attitude on the part of management would help tremendously in the way all officers view minorities. There are also valid problems in the way

departments handle cases of impropriety. Even though complaints are turned in on officers, little, if anything, is done about them. Departments routinely fail to eliminate "problem" officers. Gest also mentions that, "In Los Angeles, two of the four officers indicted in the King beating had suspension records; one had been removed for 66 days in 1987 for beating and kicking a suspect" (24). These facts merely suggest that stricter policies need to be enforced when officers are involved in such incidents. The solving of these problems could easily be started by a more concerned management in firmer rules for officers.

Yet another aspect concerning the problem of police impropriety has its roots in dealing with the criminals themselves. Police officers are under constant strain by having to deal with criminals and never knowing if the car that they are stopping may be their last. As Richard Lacayo questions, "Has police work become so dangerous that even well meaning officers can snap under pressure" (18)? Officers must be constantly aware of the dangers associated with their line of work. Due to this fact, they are generally high strung individuals who sometimes over react to common situations. Most officers felt that the United States criminal justice system does not do its part in punishing the individuals that they work so hard to capture. Lacayo illustrates this point by saying, "Has the criminal justice system, which permits too many criminals to go free

after serving only token sentences or none at all, become so ineffectual that officers feel the need to play judge and jury on the spot" (18)? Therefore, incidents involving excessive force could be avoided if somehow the stress of police work could be lessened while at the same time the criminal justice system does a better job at what it was designed to accomplish.

The national problem concerning police impropriety is becoming increasingly more evident due to the number of complaints being turned to police departments. Although not all police officers are to blame, those that are involved should be dealt with quickly and severely. This problem has its roots in issues such as racism, management attitudes toward minorities and violence, and the pressures carried by police officers who deal with Americas criminals.

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Dangerous Perfection

Breast implants can have serious side effects and should be thought through carefully before having the operation. Women are having these implants everyday and ignoring the hazards that are involved. Although most women only think of the cosmetic side of the breast implant issue, they have failed to realize that implants are potentially dangerous due to withheld information and faulty design.

In today's society women are faced more and more with large breasted models on magazine covers and television shows. Breast implants are no longer a merely cosmetic issue to women. Women feel that they need big breasts in order to further their careers or to make them feel more confident in themselves, as may be the case with many models who feel that they get much more work because they have larger breasts. Having breast implants to gain a man's attention is not the main purpose for implants any longer. Most of today's men feel that the dangers of breast implants outweighs the physical attributes of a woman with a large chest. However, many women disagree and are angry because breast implants have been banned. They still feel that it should be their choice as to whether or not they should have the surgery and take their own chances.

Today's women are not thinking clearly of the dangers of breast implants. Maybe women would be more cautious if

they knew the unsafe information that has been withheld from the public in the past. The Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., voluntarily withdrew two brands of foam-coated implants after studies suggested they might be linked to cancer. The polyurethane foam in these products disintegrates in the body producing a chemical byproduct, 2-toluene diamine (TDA) (Seligmann 56). Had this information been known in the past, women would have realized that their health was more important than their physical appearance.

If the manufacturers had done adequate testing on their products in the beginning, they would have realized that their designs had flaws. One such flaw, in an estimated 40 percent of cases, has caused a hard, painful layer of scar tissue to form around the implant (Seligmann 56). Women in this category may now realize that the risk of the implants are not worth their increased bust size. Yet, another aspect of the products faulty design is silicone-gel "bleed," or leakage, from the membrane-covered implants (Smart 94-98). These leakages have been linked to cancer in laboratory rats. Concern about the potential health risk has caused the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ban breast implantation, the third-most-popular form of cosmetic surgery after nose and liposuction operations.

Women in the United States looking to increase their chest size will now have to go to greater extents due to the FDA's banning of breast implants. Although many people are

concerned with the dangers of breast implants, most women feel that the manufacturers should not have withheld vital information about the implants. Perhaps these problems could have been avoided if tests had been conducted in the early design stages and the faulty designs uncovered and corrected.

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"A Change of Mind"

In the story "A Gathering of Old Men," written by Ernest Gaines Mathu becomes the accused of a brutal murder. Through the help of his friend Candy the scene becomes thrown off by an arrangement of eighteen old black men with shotguns. Mathu has always been one to look down upon these black men of the community, until the day they have a change in attitude, which makes Mathu give them respect.

Mathu was a true black person in the since that he had no white blood in his veins. He thought highly of the fact that he is true black and has a sense of power because of it. As stated by Clatoo, "He looked down on all the rest of us who had some, and the more you had, the more he looked down on you" (51). The community of black men are mostly mixed blacks through their back ground relations. Being true black gives Mathu a sense of power through the respect that he has for himself. He will stand up to anyone who threatens him and not think twice about it. The other black men have a different way of thinking than Mathu does. They are scared to stand up for themselves because they feel beneath their problems. They are not white people and they hold that fact against the fact that they should stand for their beliefs. Mathu knows that the white race holds problems for black race, but he will fight these problems until he feels proper justice is done.

Mathu's opinion of the black men has a shift when they all show up at his house with intentions to stand against the white men. The black men had only an idea of what had happened that day in Mathu's yard, but where there with no questions just answers to the reasons why they shot Beau. Mathu watches proudly as the old men honor themselves by standing up to the sheriff with their hid away regrets of their past. The does not like this idea of the black men standing for themselves because this is the first time they have done this and it is wasting alot of time. He requests upon Mathu to tell the black men to go home, but Mathu states, "A man got to do what he think is right" (85). The sheriff did not take kin to the idea, but the black men protested to leaving without another comment from Mathu.

Mathu is finally proud to be standing there facing the sheriff with his eighteen black friends. They have all one by one stood for themselves and not just for Mathu. They have told their problems and fears and concurred each one of them by standing against the sheriff. This makes Mathu change his ideas of his friends because they have changed their attitudes toward life. The sheriff desides to take Mathu in but gives them one last conference in Mathu's house together. Mathu takes stand to tell the men how he has changed his feelings about them and how they made that day "the proudest day of" (181) his life. That statement alone made the men feel their accomplishments and feel proud of

themselves.

Mathu has been known to be better than the rest of the blacks his whole life. Now after Beau's death and his fellow black friends stand by him he realizes that they are just as good as he is. He takes pride in standing with his friends because they have shown him that they can be men too. He shows this when he leaves without Candy and tells her that "he would go back with Clatoo and the rest of the people" (214).

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To Live is to Learn

Everyone is always looking for new ideas and interests because, they almost seem bored or unhappy with their lifestyle. In The Achievement of Desire, Richard Rodriguez tells about his relentless pursuit of knowledge, and how it put a barrier between him and his parents.¹ A man role in adolescent development is to experience new people and ideas. The human race seems to have a love affair with the word change. Everyone has different taste and interests that can be very influential to someone who is just being introduced to them. Sometimes you can get so caught up in a new friend or interest, that you tend to give them first priority over family and friends. In my senior year of high school, I had a girlfriend named Carrie, who made me do just that.

To set a proper tone for this essay, I feel it is just to make a character sketch of Carrie. One trait that stood out very boldly is that she was very possessive. A strange thing is that with her possessiveness, she was not one who liked to be tied down with one person at any given time. I wasn't allowed to look or talk about other women but, if she wanted to it was absolutely fine. She was also a very demanding person. Whatever I would do just never seemed good enough for her. She always demanded presents, and hamburgers just would never do, because she demanded to have

steak. In time I found myself almost planning almost my whole day around her demands. My single purpose in life was to please her demands, because I felt I was in love. I alienated myself from my family because she thought they didn't like her, which in all actuality was true. My family couldn't talk to me on the subject, because they felt I was happy, which is what all parents want their children to be. I was so caught up in the love I thought I had found with Carrie, that I totally turned my back on the ones who would truly love me for as long as they live.

In The Achievement of Desire, Rodriguez had a similar situation that I was put into.² Instead of being in love with a woman though, he was in love with knowledge. He thrived upon knowledge to the point that he would have to sneak and hide just to read a book. His parents resented his love, much in the same way my parents resented mine. He wasn't thinking for himself, he was just feeding in the knowledge the books would give him.

Carrie dictated my life with her words, much like the words from a book dictated the life of Rodriguez. Rodriguez and I alienated ourselves from our families and basically from the world as a whole, just so we could be with the precious loves of our lives. He used school and books to escape from his homelife, much like I had done with Carrie. He used his books to show superiority over his family, while

I used Carrie to carry out the same deed, but mine was in a more rebellious manner.

Throughout time, obsessions have worked as one of mans greatest double standards. The achievement of knowledge or a relationship, as in mine and Rodriguez's case, can be one of the greatest feelings of pure joy any human can wish to experience. On the other hand, the pursuit of obsession can tear you away from the ones you love. In The Achievement of Desire, Rodriguez seemed to have an empty void in his life, because he feels he let his pursuit for education come between him and his family. I though feel fortunate, in that I am through with my relationship with Carrie and was able to patch up any ill-feelings I had with my family before it was to late.

1All Quotations in this essay are from Richard Rodriguez, Hunger of Memory, (1981), chapter 2.

It's Only A Name

Today's economy to put it mildly is in shambles. Our nation as a whole is in the middle of a recession, in which an end doesn't seem to be happening in the near future. Yet, in these times of economic turmoil the student body at Middle Tennessee State University has elected to selfishly change the name of their school to the University of Middle Tennessee. Why, one might ask? I honestly don't know why. You would think something as minute as changing the name of a school wouldn't be such a big deal. Maybe that is true for an elementary school, but for a university with almost fifteen thousand students, the process becomes just a little more complex. [I firmly believe the changing of Middle Tennessee State University, to the University of Middle Tennessee, is too costly and not practical in the harsh economic times that the state is presently involved.]

How much would it cost to change the name of Middle Tennessee State University, one might ask? [That figure has roughly been estimated at over send-hundred thousand dollars, which by the way comes right out of the taxpayers' pockets.] I personally can think of a vast amount of ways this school can spend that much money on, rather than something as superficial as a name change. I quote the university president James Walker as saying, "I can see in these tight budget times that that's a high figure."1 I

also quote the Vice-President for Finance and Administration Jerry Sunstill as saying, "Because of the uncertainty of the budget, I don't think we can expend that amount of money."² That is two of the school's chief administrators who are against the change. They know more about the school budget than any student could ever know. I just find it hard to justify how we can spend seven-hundred thousand dollars on a name change, when there are counties in this state that can't afford busing for their students.

To quote William Shakespeare, "Whats in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet."³ [What exactly is wrong with the name Middle Tennessee State University?] There are some who feel that the University of Middle Tennessee sounds more prestigious and sophisticated. Does this mean that a man named Joe isn't as prestigious or sophisticated as a man named Alexander? I certainly hope not. So, why should someone think a school is not "worthy" of their pristine self, if it has the word "State" in the name. To me that is like paying a hundred dollars for a shirt, because it has some italian guy's name on the sleeve, when you can get the same quality of shirt for twenty dollars without a fancy name and logo. Actors and singers need stage names, universities do not. I feel the last thing that should determine whether someone picks a school is the name.

[What is good for the university and its students?]

That should be what is on the minds of the administrators, faculty, and students. I feel that there are other programs that are worthy, and should take priority over something as feeble as changing the name of the university. The changing of the name will have to be approved by the state legislature, which I seriously doubt will happen. I feel that as young adults the students at the university should become more aware of the state of our state and national economy. All the points I have mentioned make me still feel that I firmly believe the changing of Middle Tennessee State University, to the University of Middle Tennessee, is too costly and not practical in the harsh economic times that the state is presently involved.

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2. Gannon, Sam. "Name change to cost over \$700,000:
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3. Shakespeare, William. Romeo and Juliet 1597: Act II,
Scene IV

To Kill A Racist

During the Civil War President Abraham Lincoln passed the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the blackman from the oppressions of slavery. Since that bill has been enacted into law, the black man has made great strides to be affluent into today's society. Today's black man owns his own business, holds public office, is a supreme court justice, and has also become a respected member of his community. However, this was not always the case. Before the civil rights movement in the 1960's with Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Jesse Jackson to name a few, the black man was thought of as a second class citizen whose rights could be and were frequently violated. Harper Lee's book, To Kill A Mockingbird, shows the struggle of the black man in the 1930's to be treated as an equal citizen, like he is today.

One area that To Kill A Mockingbird touched on, was the separation of the black man and the white man. In the book, the white people of the town lived in their own subdivisions and nice little houses. On the other hand, the black people of the town lived down in the valley. In their slum houses without a nice picket fence to frame in their yards. The separation of races was even present in the church. The white people had their nice churches with their hymn books and nice pulpits. On the contrary, the black church had

only one hymn book that was used by the whole congregation (121). The church is supposed to be a place where no man should be judged for the color of his skin, because God is supposed to love everyone no matter what race they are. It seems hypocritical that a white man thinks he is too good to worship with a black man, when the man they worship doesn't care what colored skin they have. There was also segregation apparent in the courtroom. In that the colored people had their own section up in the balcony. The white people sat on the ground floor away from the coloreds (164).

Another area that To Kill A Mockingbird touched on that contrasts with the way a black man is treated today, is how loosely racial slang terms were used by whites towards blacks. Today if a white person blurts out the word nigger, coon, or jig-a-boo, he quickly looks around his shoulder either before or after he say it, just to make sure a black person can't hear him. In To Kill A Mockingbird this was not the case. It is appalling how loosely the term "nigger" is used by whites in the book, even with a black person in the same room. The way that Mr. Gilmer just loosely used the word "boy" while cross examining Tom Robinson, would not stand today in a court of law (196).

It is hard to believe how the black man ever made anything of himself in this world; with the way he was treated back in the time the book was written about. Today a black man can walk into a restaurant, courtroom, or any

other place for that matter, and sit wherever he pleases. It is amazing to believe how a man like Micheal Jordan could have been treated back in the 1930's. Gone are the days of the black man being portrayed as picking cotton and eating watermelon. Yes, those days are gone, and it can be attributed to books like To Kill A Mockingbird, that makes people aware of social ills as serious as blind prejudice and discrimination.

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The 2 Lewd Crew

The rock music industry has always stretched the boundaries on how obscene the lyrics of songs could be, before they were ruled offensive by public scrutiny. Today it seems as though a large part of the industry has lost all of their moral values, and the industry has turned into an "anything goes" business. What started out with the misunderstood lyrics of Louie Louie, has now turned into songs about rape, violence, homicide, and the demoralization of women. The musicians think they can get away with this trash, but when confronted they always yell about their first amendment right to free speech. To say these lyrics are not obscene is like someone yelling fire in a crowded theatre, which does not qualify as constitutionally protected speech. Not to say that Elvis Presley or the Beatles were obscene, but some of today's groups, such as the 2 Live Crew, have become too vulgar and forgotten that music is all about entertainmen.

It seems that anytime the issue of free speech is questioned, there are always a small percentage of people who cry foul. It's ironic; In all the furor over 2 Live Crews' record album As Nasty As They Wanna Be, which was ruled obscene by a federal judge in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, many publications who took a hard-line First Amendment approach were unable or unwilling to bolster their

arguements with quotations from the songs. Apparently, they judged the lyrics too filthy, too offensive, to be allowed to see the light of day. None of the journalists, music critics, or television commentators who rambled on about "free speech" excercised their freedom of speech to enlighten readers and viewers as to what, specifically, all the uproar was about. What the mainstream media were saying, in effect was: We wouldn't stoop to airing this trash, but anybody sick enough to have an appetite for it should be allowed to have it.

A main focal point in these songs are rape and the demoralization of women. To think that people are buying these albums for enjoyment is a scary thought and a serious blow to the gut of societies moral standards. To see how one can get entertained from listening to a fictitious rape is perverted and sick. The lyrics lead one to believe that a man has to insult a woman before he can be turned on. This just isn't the case in most situations. A majority of the men who rape are driven not by lust, but by fantasies of power and control over women: fantasies that these lyrics seem to make acheivable. It's absurd to say that these lyrics are "wildly exaggerated" and "grossly funny", unless you are convinced that rape is a "wildly exaggerated" and "grossly funny" sexual act.

Has the music industry lost touch with morality? This question, at the present time, has to be answered "yes". As

long as videos are allowed to promote these songs with almost nude women and the public keeps buying these obscene albums, then there seems to be no end in sight. The sad thing is that some of these groups biggest fans are kids that range from age twelve to eighteen. It is very sad to hear a twelve year old singing about the rape of a woman. I am not necessarily saying that these lyrics cause rape, although one could make a case for their doing so. I am saying that they celebrate rape, and that, I think, is obscene.

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