

Palabras

WORDS



Fall 2005

Palabras publishes original research, essays, fiction, poetry, and art by Clovis Community College students and residents of New Mexico.

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Palabras is also an academic journal and accepts submissions from students across the United States who are currently working on undergraduate degrees.

Palabras

Journal of Exchange

www.clovis.edu/web2/palabras/index.asp

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Fall 2005

Volume 4 Issue 1

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Palabras favors an open submissions policy: anyone who would like to submit, may. Please submit work in hard copy format to the editor in **Faculty Office 509**, in e-mail format to **palabrasje@hotmail.com**, or in hard copy format to the **CCC Bookstore**. Please include a phone number or e-mail address so the editor may contact you.

Submissions should be no longer than 5 double-spaced pages, or approximately 1500 words. If documented, then in MLA, APA, or other acceptable format. If you have an essay, paper, or story longer than the specifications mentioned, please contact the editor at **505-769-4906** or at **palabrasje@hotmail.com**, as excerpts may be publishable.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please write to the editor at palabrasje@hotmail.com.



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...from the Editors

LOOKING FOR A CHAPEL DOOR

RAYMOND E ATCHLEY

It seems like last week that I sent Gina Hochhalter a note resigning my position as associate editor of the *Palabras*. I was overwhelmed with work at that time, as I struck further out on my hero's journey to acquire my doctorate in "Thinkology." I'm still working towards that aspiration and though I haven't managed the doctorate yet, I have garnered a bit more education. I have just completed the course work for a class in the History of the American Civil Rights movement. It has been a wonderful experience reading about the now late Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and many more. In order to break from the class requirement of reading eight biographical and research books, I kicked back the other night with a new movie.

Mounted in my recliner, button box well in hand, and a sack full of Polish sandwiches (with kraut, of course), I commenced to watch a dramatization of the story of Martin Luther and the Reformation of the 16th century. Appropriately titled *Luther*, starring Ralph Fiennes in the lead, I cranked up the DVD player and munched Polish sausage and slurped down a gallon of cola. What a wonderful respite from the academic pursuits – but at a cost.

That night as I dozed off, I had a dream. I was on the campus of Clovis Community College holding two nails and a three-pound claw hammer. Someone had moved the Lincoln Memorial to the site of the Clovis Man statue, and I was at the podium on the stairs lecturing. There was a huge crowd of students and teachers as I ranted about the need for a chapel at CCC. Dr. Rowley stepped from the crowd and told me there was no budget for a chapel. I acquiesced to that reality but argued that surely we had enough money for a nice chapel door.

The "ghost" of Dr. McClure then appeared, hovering over the gathered throng, and asked: "For what dost thou want of a chapel door, Raymond?"



Ist thou intent evil or foresoothe the good of all?" I looked upon the glimmering visage and answered that I needed a door upon which to nail ninety-five theses for the betterment of all the students. Dr. Lloyd waved vigorously querying me as to the content of these theses. I told her I hadn't written them yet and did not intend to until I had a chapelesque door on which to nail them. Nita Howard hollered at me from the back of the crowd and sternly reminded me that they had to be written in German not Latin, if and when I got my door. Gina piped in that I could barely communicate in English much less German. Dr. McClure's poltergeist reappeared and sadly told me that she had taken my request to a higher power. "God?" I asked.

"No... Bill," she retorted. Continuing, she said that I could not have my door; or at least not until I had done my penance for wrongs committed as an undergraduate, such as over-using the comma in my writings. "What kind of penance must I perform?"

Dr. McClure's voice resonated over the mall: "You must return to the *Palabras* as Associate Editor and do your time until the powers deem you worthy for your door."

I woke up and I'm back. Now where did I put that hammer?

HAVE A SEAT. . .

GINA L HOCHHALTER

In the Fall 2002 issue of *Palabras*, Charles Lott, in "Sitting Down: A Dedication," says, "Chairs, couches, benches, five gallon buckets, or any number of things to sit on always seem to be around whenever someone utters that infamous, and sometimes ominous phrase, 'have a seat'.... It seems that there has always been a seat around when my knees weren't quite there" (14, 15). I imagine that sitting down is exactly what Luther did after he barely escaped with his life from the charge of heresy before Johann Eck and the Diet of Worms¹ (Durant 277). Before the Diet (assembly), he is fabled to have said of his 95 theses: "*Stehe Ich, Ich kann nicht anders.*"² Upon his miraculous, head-still-intact return to Wittenberg University, he must have needed to sit, and that he did. From Germany he continued to encourage the Church of Rome to

revise its corrupt edicts of Indulgences – all the while developing Lutheran theology – but refused to support the violent and bloody Peasant’s Revolt that followed his “heresy.” He is both revered and cursed for his decision to sit still.

For my own part, I am thankful for dreams.

I’m more akin to that century’s Ignatius Loyola who wandered mendicant with an ass-load of books leading his way³ as he begged for food and tuition money for entrance into the College de Montaigu (299) before making his way to Pope Paul III (300). Better yet, if I could choose any time in which to live, it would be (as a man) 14th century Florence – there I could study the classics, hang out with Leonardo, sigh content with Ficino’s medical Soul work, and help to collect the expensive, ‘sacred,’ manuscripted scrolls for Lorenzo or Calvino. And yet –



The Door of 16th century Germany was considered an “academic billboard” (271) upon which challenges were an offering to all who wanted to debate them. It just so happened that 48 of the 95 theses that Luther posted infuriated an already-accused-of-being-corrupt-and-having-had-to-burn-John Huss-at-the-stake-because-of-it Church. Even though Luther came close to being roasted⁴, Charles V let him go (as a proclaimed heretic) under condition that he promise not to preach or make any “tumult” (278). Luther concurred, and found shelter at Wittenberg.

To compliment Sir Raymond’s Door, it seems we’ll need a place to sit where we might dote upon the etching, carving, and magic of the door, but feel comfortably human in the process (and maybe from there move into philosophical doors, or why this one must be heavy and wooden, and not stained glass – I imagine a claw hammer has something to do with it.)

While the chapelesque door opens and closes allowing dreams and images entrance or exit, the seat is a comfortable cushion from which to analyze and interpret those images (some might deem them cosmic glitches). It’s while being seated that commaphrenia, chains and ghosts, furniture, bugs, and saints are appreciated so we may discover their messages. Says depth psychologist Thomas Moore (an avid reader of Ficino’s writings): “The chair”

– a metaphor for the therapeutic couch – “suggests reflection, conversation, stillness, interiority, support, and ordinariness” (qtd. Hillman 71). The chair is the place where we are encouraged to remain with the soul in our dreams.

No matter what it is that comes to us, those images have interesting, reveal-atory meaning. Example: James Hillman says this of how the image of bugs speak to us from dreams:

Dreams show bugs have something to teach. They demonstrate the intentions of the natural mind, the undeviating faith of desire, and the urge to survive.

They bring the community consciousness of a swarm and hive, a *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, a cosmic sympathy, deeper than a social contract. They conjoin and enjoy the contrary elements of earth and air, show amazing capacities to conform and transform, and are resolute in their persistence to draw a dreamer out. . . . At the end we feel they want us, these winged creatures with their astonishing eyes. They come to us in dreams which is what angels are supposed to do. Startling, terrifying, sudden: is this the only way angels can now enter our world which has no openings for their welcome? (69)

I think that if we are to help Raymond write those 95 theses – assuming he gets The Door (*Helfen Sie mir, bitte. Nuen und neunsig, wo nicht?*) – and if we are resolute in our desire for a Chapel, we need a place to sit so we can smoke smokeless cigars, discuss Freud, and eat the nuts that have fallen from the trees (are those edible?) all the while pondering the *naturales* of doors and seats, wood vs. stained glass, bugs and angels, habits and humanity. Having said this, and even though I realize a bucket might be more feasible, I opt in penance for a couch.

Notes and Works Cited

- ¹ This has nothing to do with eating grubs for dinner.
 - ² “Here I stand; I can do no other” (Durant 278).
 - ³ “Disappointed with Spain, [Ignatius] set out for Paris, always on foot and in pilgrim’s garb, but now driving before him a donkey loaded with books.”
 - ⁴ Durant’s term, 285.
- Durant, Will. *Heroes of History*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001.
- Hillman, James. *A Blue Fire*. Introduced and edited by Thomas Moore. New York: HarperPerennial, 1989.

IDENTITY CRISIS

LEVI NEWKIRK

Arielle walked down the hall one day. The colors she wore were dull and gray. With daggers, chains, and slipknots she liked to play, in an awfully strange and macabre way. Smudges from shady black, zip-up boots marked her way. When she passed the boys, her dark hair would sway, as she strolled by on that cloudy day.

As he lifted his broad-brimmed, felt hat, one boy exclaimed to his roping buddy, "Look at that gothic freak!" his face contorting in utter disgust, "It's beyond me why those weirdos would **want** to look like that." He struggled for a moment to unbutton the top button of his long-sleeved, silk, western shirt. Afterward, he glanced down and adjusted the hefty belt-buckle, gaudily displaying the words "Runner-Up Calf Roping 2004" at the front of his waist. This contributed to the security of his already exceedingly snug Wranglers. The chances of them falling down over his leather boots, with intricately engraved images of the traditional southwest, was practically nonexistent.

After moving away from the bench he was seated on, he turned, dumfounded by the sound of laughter coming from behind him. For some unbeknownst reason, members of the school science club were having a laugh at the expense of some poor loser in front of him. He pitied whoever was bizarre enough to be laughed at by the school's biggest geeks. He chuckled to himself as he walked away, toilet paper stuck to the bottom of his left boot.

What has transpired in this story is a common identity clash. Before it is possible to fully understand what happened here, it is important to first have a working knowledge of what identity really is. Identity can be defined as a noun meaning, "The fact or condition of being exactly alike, distinctness in regard to character and appearance, being the same person or thing as one known to exist" (*Webster's Students Dictionary* 416). While this definition does give a true picture of a part of the definition of identity, it does not cover in specificity the true nature of the word. "Sameness" and "distinctness" are a mere step below being antonymous. *Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary* describes it as, "Sameness of essential or generic

character in different instances, sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing, the distinguishing character or personality of an individual, the condition of being the same with something described or asserted." It is apparent that these words are incapable of expressing the full features of identity. As the broad simplicity of the 'dictionary term' may not be incorrect, it does not by any means convey the power and significance of the word, identity. Identity seems to be nothing but a crisis.

As the basic definition is insufficient to demonstrate the inner significance of identity, many have offered their qualified opinions as to what it is really composed of. In his story, "The Skin Game," Joe Queenan conveys his opinion of how the possession of tattoos can, and do, affect the image of both the bearer and some who witness the epidermal mural. His father falls under the characterization of a demanding, conventionally masculine war veteran, who wishes to see his son follow in his "masculine" footsteps by getting a tattoo. Queenan, however, realizes that the associations of having a tattoo have changed from having a brutish, rebellious connotation to being an action taken, by many, to extremes that have defiled the previous "purity" of the symbol. While he does not condemn them, he believes that by getting one, he would fail to accomplish any credible end.

Queenan's view of identity is comprised mainly of the concept that identity is formed by one's actions and social associations with symbols (368). Unlike the dictionary definition of identity, his definition attempts to see beyond the basic concept of an objective perspective. This would mean that we hold the power to control our identity by manipulating the image we portray to others. To some extent this is true. By wearing makeup, different kinds of clothes, and becoming part of a prescribed social group, we can influence both the way society views us and how we really are. This is done almost incessantly in our culture. However, choice cannot account for all aspects of identity, as humanity will invariably use familiar attributes to compare and contrast each other.

Judith Ortiz Cofer was "born a white girl in Puerto Rico but became a brown girl when [she] came to live in the United States" ("The Story of

My Body" 315). She uses the stereotypes placed upon her in her life as a member of two cultures to demonstrate the physical characteristics that create identity. The primary characteristics that she stresses are color, size, and shape. This theory is very true, as these are the primary features that humans tend to base most assumptions of others on. Sight is one of the most easily understood of the senses. A vast quantity of the English language is based around sight, such as the boy's judgment of Arielle based on the color and style of dress. The concepts mentioned above form the core of what the mind creates images of. This is, unquestionably, a significant contributor to identity, but this view does not cover all aspects of identity. Other methods of judgment are therefore used in addition.

Identity is a word referring to the characteristics and qualities, which make people, groups, or things identifiable as like unto others of their kind and separate and discernible from other individuals or groups. Arielle, for example, had physical characteristics that differed from the other characters I mentioned. Her identity was perceived as "abnormal," as it was dissimilar from that of the young man who was surveying her. As identity is relative to the viewer's reference point, as could be seen by the science club's perception of the rodeo boy as a dimwit, rather than his opinion of being "normal." The most important and least understood part of identity is the heart and soul of the being or group who possess a unique identity. The thing that most contributes to one's identity is his or her own self-image. It is not just a "sameness" or a "difference." It is both. It may be possessed by everything in existence, but each one is unique, separate from the others, yet, making one and the same with its kindred beings. Identity is indeed a regulated crisis of beings, those who see and those who believe.

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ONESELF

LINDSAY ANN MANSELL

"Identity is defined as the distinguishing character or personality of an individual" (*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 575). This is an accurate definition because each person has a unique identity: every person is distinguished from others by their thoughts, beliefs, actions and reactions, and personalities. These distinguishing characteristics are most evident around other people.

Everything about a person is based on his or her thoughts and beliefs. Take a teenage girl for example. Say she believes in modesty; it shows through the way she dresses and presents herself to those around her. Her belief system is what controls the way she acts, dresses, and thinks. In turn her beliefs have some basis on the way she was raised. Parents directly affect their children's belief system; whether it is in a negative or positive way, it can always be traced back to their childhood. As in the movie *Billy Elliot*: his best friend's father dressed up like a woman when no one else was around and so the little boy automatically thought it was "normal" for people to do that.

As a society we all act and react in different ways; take the issue of homosexual marriages for example. I might fight against it while some of my fellow classmates fight for it. These actions and reactions are still based solely on our beliefs and thoughts about the subject and the way it will affect our own lives.

Many think that our true identity is most evident when we are alone and no one else is around: "that is when a person is truly he(r)self." However, I choose to believe that our identity is based on who we are the majority of the time – since we are interacting more with people in one day than we are alone, our identity is based on how we are around people. Therefore, we are ourselves when we are around other people.

Think about it: when we are by ourselves, how are we distinguished from others? We aren't. We can only be distinguished from others when we are around others and have someone else's identity to compare to our own. In "The Story of My Body" Cofer states that she only noticed her complexion when she over-heard the adults talking about it, and it was only when she could compare her skin to her fellow Puerto Ricans that her distinguishing

characteristic was known (315). When by herself, Cofer could see her skin the way she wanted – dark, light, or medium – which would make her like everyone else. Her identity is created and strengthened only by the ridicule she receives. The essential part of her identity, her difference, would be lost when on her own; her identity would be changed if her skin was the same as her Puerto Rican friends.

There isn't always a natural uniqueness about our identity; many often find themselves fighting for individual identity. "No, from the time I was old enough to pronounce the word tattoos, I thought they were stupid" (Queenan 366). Queenan had to fight for what he believed in order to be set apart from his father – he didn't want a tattoo like his father, but he still longed for his father's approval on the disagreement. The same is true in *Billy Elliot*: Billy saw no wrong in ballet but longed for his father's support on the matter so he fought for what he believed; he fought for his own unique identity. "Never settle for being someone's slogan because you are poetry" (Anonymous). We are all in our authentic way poetic: no one is the same and no one is a slogan.

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MY PIERCING

SAVANNAH ROMERO

As I look into the mirror I gaze at my reflection; I feel new. I can remember the day I decided to alter my appearance. I'm still not sure what came over me. I simply woke up one morning and decided to pierce my nose. Yeah, out of all my pierceable parts I chose the most obvious: my nose! Sure I gave the pros and cons some thought; but in the end, my need for change won over reason.

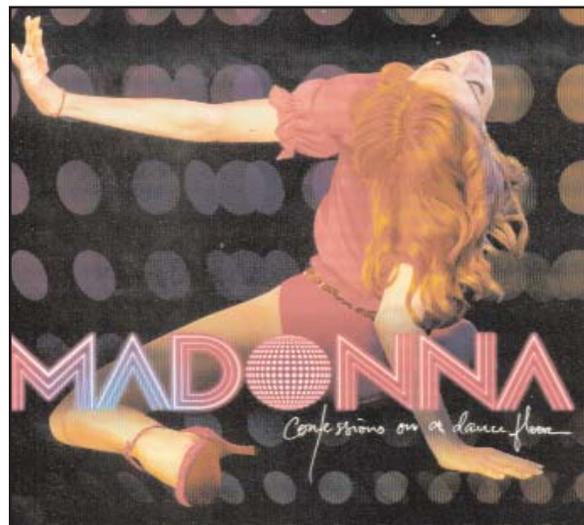
Within the hour I was in this little heavy metal style tattoo parlor picking out a nose ring. The waiting felt endless as I sat in what looked like furniture from a dentist's office. I have to admit the chair was just a little creepy, and it threw me off a bit. But before I had time to over-analyze the furniture, I was pierced.

I didn't exhale until I walked out of the tattoo parlor. I couldn't believe I had been so bold! Everything began to change the minute I walked out of the door. Every person I encountered from that moment seemed to stare.

I loved it!

Who knew one simple piece of jewelry could be the cause of so much change? As I walked down the street I felt so individual and free. I was no longer what society told me I should be or look like. I was me! Almost every person I encountered from that moment on had to think twice when they looked at me. I was noticed, I stood out, and I enjoyed every second of it.

Recommended Album



Borrowed from the ad on page 2 of the 22 Nov. 2005 issue of *The Advocate*: "Exposure to this music may result in feelings of openness, euphoria, empathy, love, heightened self-awareness, increased stamina and physical energy, increased sex drive/response, increased confidence and increased social responsiveness. Use with caution." For a full review of Madonna's *Confessions on a Dance Floor*, see David White's "Music Pick," p. 88 of *The Advocate*.

I often wonder if I would feel the same about myself had I not acted on my sudden impulse. Would I still be the center of attention had I pierced my tongue or my ear? Who knows – I might have gotten a tattoo instead. (I am glad I chose to get pierced because this nose ring suits me.)

Maybe it pays to listen to those subtle voices from within that scream for change from time to time. Maybe I just need to get out more. Either way I have fulfilled my need for change and adventure. My nose is pierced and I love it. My nose is pierced because it was my one way to be me.

Now when I walk down the street I don't notice who stares or who does not notice me. I walk down the street being myself because my piercing has become a part of me. I'm just me, a woman, a woman who knows how to act on impulse and ignore reason when necessary. I am just an individual in today's society who chooses to be just that, individual.



A Friday Caprock, NM
November 2005

Gina L Hochhalter

ABOUT A TOMBOY

SAVANNAH ROMERO

If someone were to look in my closet they would probably never guess that I was a tomboy. My friends and family, however, know the real me. They know that most of my favorite articles of clothing never go on hangers. My mom knows that I hide my old 501s and faded tee shirts so that my girlfriend won't throw them away when I'm out. Sure, I'm "prissy," and to see me not matching or without make-up is to see me in rare form; but it wasn't always like this. In fact, my mother and her sisters went through great pain to insure that I would turn out this way.

Being a tomboy, I had a rather unusual upbringing. For most girls who are a little rough around the edges, their parents just accept what they are and pray that they will grow out of it. This was most definitely not the case for me. The adults in my life were mainly etiquette-conscious females, and at times it seemed their only goal in life was to turn me into a proper young lady, dresses and all. There was one other who endured this endless torture with me and that was my cousin, Valeen; she was also a die-hard tomboy. Out of twelve grandchildren, five of us were girls, and Valeen and I were the youngest of this five.

Our playmates consisted of mainly male cousins who were both bigger in size and age. For Valeen and I growing amongst boys was much like being at constant war; at times there were truces, but for the most part life was a battlefield. On most days we enjoyed activities most girls would not dare attempt: tree climbing, wrestling, and who could forget, frog catching? Of course there were days when Valeen and I simply wanted to be girls. Those were the days we attempted our Barbie fashion shows, and those were the days Barbie and Teresa were kidnapped, or taken hostage.

For the most part, attempting hostage negotiations was futile; the boys always requested ransoms for the safe return of our favored playthings. However, Valeen and I both agreed that to pay would only show weakness. Besides, we were at war and wars were bound to have their casualties. So Valeen and I would carry on as if unscathed by the mutilation of our dolls. Valeen and I vowed to be braver and stronger, and by any means necessary, beat the boys at any and everything possible.

As the years passed, we grew more and more competitive. If the boys came across a dare they deemed too dangerous, Valeen or I would take it on seemingly fearlessly. If we came across bullies at school (usually boys) we would take them on as well. This did not go over so well with our mothers; we were constantly nagged and ridiculed. At times we were even grounded (for ruining our Sunday dresses). Regardless of all this we were true to our rebel souls.

Then came middle school and being a year older than Valeen, I endured my first year alone. I made friends, but none were as comical or as daring. Even worse, they were all boy crazy! This was incomprehensible to me. How could one not only side with the enemy, but want to be considered attractive to them as well! Seeing my friends lower themselves just to be noticed by the boys made them less trustworthy to me. I kept thinking to myself just one more year and Valeen will be at the same school.

That year finally came, but different interests and friends created distance between us. Believe it or not, I joined the drill team and really liked it. Without even noticing, I began to soften up. My male cousins discovered girls and became totally different people. I became immersed in cheer leading competitions, fundraisers, and school spirit. Valeen decided to move to California with her father. Valeen's decision to move marked the final chapter in our childhood. We were growing up and life had changed us all.

After Valeen left, my life changed dramatically. I no longer fought being a girl, and more than that, I no longer fought becoming a woman. None of these changes in my life changed my spirit; they merely changed my appearance. For once I no longer dressed or looked like a boy with long hair. I no longer despised social occasions, which involved dressing formally. More than that, I enjoyed them.

Now days I am the mother of three boys, and Valeen is the mother of a little girl; she still keeps in touch from California. As for me, I'm still at war with the boys, only now it involves plastic army men and my sons. Out of eighteen great-grandchildren only eight are boys; three are mine. Only now the boys don't believe the girls are weak or less able than the boys. On more than one occasion I have overheard my son telling my niece, "Sure you can do it. Girls can do anything boys can do."

“MY BIG WISH”

JOHN LANE

As a young boy, growing up in the "sticks" of New Mexico, as some might call it, I loved to sit around and watch the astronaut movies. I would wish and dream of the day that I would step foot on the "Red Planet" called Mars. I was going to be the first person to visit Mars in the entire world, and nothing was going to stop me. So I thought.

When I turned sixteen, I collapsed while helping my mom do some housework. Mom rushed me to the doctor's office to see what was wrong. For the next six months, I went through an abundance of tests to try to determine what was wrong with me. Just looking at me, you would see a healthy young man, without a care in the world. I was one of those kids that thought if I did everything I was told growing up – look both ways before crossing the street and don't eat anything off the floor – then I would live forever. After months and months of prodding, poking, and hundreds of cat scans and x-rays, a doctor from a children's hospital diagnosed my illness. A bunch of doctors, from around the world, had a conference to name the disease that I had. None of the doctors could come up with a good name until one spoke up and said, "Let's name it after the boy." Everyone agreed finally and named it the Lane disease. All it meant was that my heart stopped growing when I was around the age of eight and no one really knew why.

Of course, since it was a brand new disease, there was not a cure for it yet. The doctors said that I would never be able to fly again for the rest of my life, much less be an astronaut. They were also unsure how long I would live. After hearing that, I just busted out crying and cried for two days. Then I realized that I did not care if it killed me, I would go to Mars. I sat down at my computer, searched and searched for some kind of charity that would help me reach my big dream. As I searched, I found many frauds that wanted me to send money. Then I found a charity that was called Hearts Apart. This free charity would try their hardest to give kids anything that they could before they died. I talked to my mom about contacting the charity and she agreed. After a brief meeting with the president of the charity and

NASA, we had it all set up. I was going to Mars!

The next day I went to get a will so I could leave everything I had to the charity.

The day had finally arrived. I got my suit on and was sitting in the space ship waiting to go. Then the countdown began. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. From the time we hit one, until the time we were out of the atmosphere, I could not stop smiling. (It was not because I was so happy, necessarily, but because of the g-force from take off; I could not get my face back to normal.) It took us sixteen days to get to where we could see Mars and another day before we touched down. When we landed, it was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. It was barren and flat, and reminded me of my home town of Clovis, New Mexico.

We got off the ship and immediately started exploring. Since there was no gravity, we could not go too far or we would have fallen off into outer space. There were gigantic craters all around us. They had to be the size of the Grand Canyon in depth. As we walked, we came upon a crater that had to be over one mile deep. I went back to the ship to get a rope so we could explore the crater. As I was scaling down the inside of the crater, I heard noises that sounded like elephants. The other people with me got scared and went back up, but I had to see what it was. What did it matter if I was going to die anyway? I might as well have fun while I can. When I reached the bottom, I saw the weirdest thing. There was a family of people down there, but they had long noses like elephants. They could not talk; all they could do was honk like an elephant. I took many pictures because I knew that no one would believe me.

Now it was time to leave. As I started climbing out of the crater, my chest started to tighten and I could not breathe. I managed to get back to the top and let everyone know what I had seen. Then I collapsed again. The guys knew we had to return to Earth before I got extremely bad. On day fifteen of the journey back, I woke up. As soon as I woke up, I started to write everything in my journal in detail. It took me about two days to finish my entries in my journal. Then as soon as I finished, the captain said we were about to enter the Earth's atmosphere and we needed to buckle up. That was

the last thing I heard.

The space ship landed today. As I pulled up there at the sight, there was an ambulance and paramedics on the scene. I heard everyone talking about someone who had passed out and was not waking up. As soon as the paramedics started to get off the space ship, I ran to them faster than I have ever run in my life. I pulled the sheet back to see Johnny there with his camera, journal, and a big smile on his face. It has been about a year since Johnny died and after reading his journal, I decided to write his story for him. Due to the reentry burst, the film from Johnny's camera was blank. We're unable to view the pictures that Johnny wrote about in his journal, but I am glad that my son Johnny received his big wish.

SANCTUARY

GEN LAWSON

The car pings softly as it cools. I have been driving too fast, too hard, trying to banish my demons with a ton of silver metal. The stealing woodland calm penetrates the smoke of my thoughts, and I am suddenly sure that I have come to the right place.

I climb out of my car, locking it carefully behind me as I take a deep breath of the vibrant pine scented air. I take off my shirt and fold it neatly, and step lightly down a faint trail to the creek. At the water's edge, I lay my shirt down on the rocks and small grasses, and pile my other clothes atop it, then step nakedly into the water. Submerged to my knees, I wade downstream until I come to a large rock formation rising from the earth, a sandstone dinosaur.

Walking the few yards to the monolith, across rushes and pebbles, I begin to climb the rocky cliff. Often my feet slip, and sharp rocks and skeletal fallen trees tear my unprotected skin.

Eventually, the beast is conquered and I stand two hundred feet above the ground in brilliant summer sunshine. A crevasse separates me from a dwarf pine that somehow grows out of solid rock – today it seems a kindred spirit, so I sit cross-legged across the gulf from it.

With a cry I tear out a handful of long hair and, chanting, scatter it to the breeze as I summon

my angel, my demon, my self.

The spirit comes, and I feel it settle into the space in my heart that it was displaced from long ago

In my mind's eye I see her, feathered and wild and beautiful. She demands that I speak to her, and tell her why I call her after saying so many times that I did not need her.

"That which took your place is gone from me," I tell her, "leaving me empty. I am lost without you, my guide, and the path has disappeared."

She turns her head so that I see her profile, and one eye sparkles at me.

"You call me, knowing I will come, to ask me to return to you and make you unforsaken?"

"Yes, "I whisper

"And you will not drive me out again?"

"No."

"How can I believe this?"

I bow my head in pain. "I have learned."

Her laughter is like the creek, joyous and alive. The brief image warms me, and I feel the ecstasy of her return.

Take me. I send my thoughts to her.

I feel the burning above my shoulder blades and across my forehead. In the past, I always disliked the process of transformation, the pain and disorientation. Today I welcome it; it is a homecoming as I feel our beings merge.

When I look across at the pine tree, it is the same, but now I can see tiny insects crawling on the needles and thin strands of spider webs twisting in the breeze. I breathe in and smell the stories of mice wafting up from the grass hundreds of feet below. I no longer see her; the face and the voice are gone – replaced by the truth of her and the entirety of us.

Without words, in a singsong of thought, she tells me to cast off burdens and bonds, and leave my earthly loves behind. In a silent scream of pleasure I reply.

We fly.

Slip into the sky and soar forever.

Together, one.

Slowly, the wounds in my heart stop their rushing flow, turning first to a trickle, then to a scar, then finally to a warm pulsating wholeness. Somewhere in the thinning heavens we find my soul.

I am healed.

We alight back on the rocky ledge and preen in our contented togetherness. Strangely, a primary comes loose in my beak – a large, strong, beautiful feather loose for no reason. As I am about to let it fall to the creek far below, some small thought from her persuades me to drop it on the ledge instead.

Then, suddenly, it is time and I return to the misshapen, grounded being that evolution has made me. I sit on the stone, eyes closed, shivering in my pale and featherless body. It is always difficult to leave, but soon I recover and open my eyes. I feel for her presence – to my joy she is there: deep in my chest is a heart beating much faster than mine

Picking up the feather, I stare at it for a long time, finally deciding to keep it. Perhaps.

Someday. I think. *Someone.*

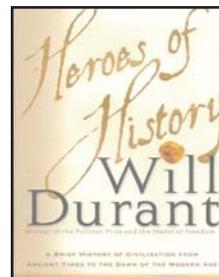
Standing, I face a treacherous climb down from my tower, a walk in a cold stream, and a long drive home with an aching head.

I realize that none of these things matter. I am at peace.

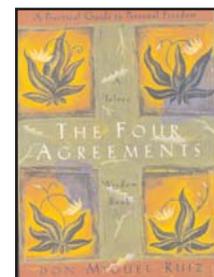
Once again, I know the sanctuary of self.

Gen is studying Law at the University of New Mexico.

Recommended Readings



In his inspiring and colorful look at the past, Durant "traces the lives and ideas of those who have helped to shape history, from its dawn to the beginning of the modern world."



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Monodramas

TEAM COACH

ROY BONNEY

(Original story)

A coach starts talking about his team, and says to a man that they are a good team. They might not do good in the meet next weekend, but then he says that they might not do good because they all have their heads up their butts.

(Coach's perspective)

Starts to think,
Sits down,
Go to the right,
No left,
tackle to the right guard,
No the Left guard,
Run to the outside,
No cut to the inside,
I've got to find something that will work,
I just don't know, I just don't know.
GOD! I wish I could find something that would work.

UNTITLED

MATT CHAVEZ

(Cop walking into the school dance.)

God, why here? Embarrassing!

Not too bad, just

(counting kids)

1, 2, 3...4, 5...6, 7, 8

Ha ha, 8 kids; at least these 8 are not out drinking.

(Walking around the dance floor)

My god! Can't dance

Homeboy looks like a damn Horny gorilla with fleas or something

Poor girl

Losers, man, I swear

I'm out.

GOSSIP

BRIAN MUNIZ

(Pitch black stage)

(Low voice)

(Whispering)

Why doesn't it stop,
You don't know me,
Why doesn't it stop?

(Light comes on)

(Medium voice)

(Whispering in background)

All it does is hurt,
Leave me alone,
All it does is hurt.

(Door appears and man walks out onto stage)

(Loud voice)

(Whispering in background)

Don't you have anything better to do?
GO GET A LIFE!!!

(Light goes out)

(Spotlight shines on the person speaking the lines)

(Whispering swarms the person) (Tries to fight off the whispering but he falls to the ground dead)

WHEN HATE GOES TOO FAR

CEOLA M. BROWN

Traditionally, hate is used in a person's daily vocabulary to express a strong emotion of dislike. To hate something or someone is not always a bad thing. Hate can be used to promote good behavior. Many times when people say they hate another person they are not using hate in its true sense. Instead, it is said out of spite. Others may express hate for a type of food or a certain outfit when they really mean they dislike them. To hate is a natural right and part of being human. It is okay to acknowledge the feelings of hate; it only becomes a problem when a person acts on those feelings and harms others. There have been times in history when people united in large numbers to torment others and/or contribute to mass killing because of hate, which is influenced by mythology, fear, poverty, education, and the media.

Factors that instigate hate

Mr. Raymond Atchley, a tutor at Clovis Community College, defined mythology as "a way of expressing something that can't be described or understood." For example, how high is up? No one really knows how high up is. So people come up with all sorts of meanings to describe how high up is to make sense of this unknown. For example, "it's as high as the heavens" is a common myth to explain how high up is.

I believe myths are popular beliefs of stories of the past that are not always true but easily accepted by people who can benefit from the myths in some way, which is why hate and mythology are connected. People use myths to help make their feelings of hate for a certain group of people justifiable. For instance, the Bible story about Ham, the father of Canaan (the origin of black people) was cursed and marked by Noah his father to be servant of servants. This was Ham's punishment for belittling and laughing at his father for being drunk (Genesis 4:2-13).

Many white Christians read the Bible scriptures on Ham's mark and began to form their own interpretations and myths that benefited them. For example, some white Christians took Ham's story and applied it to blacks. Since it is believed that

blacks originated from Canaan they bore the curse to be servants of servants and hating them and making them slaves was justifiable as if it were blacks' destiny to be treated that way.

Hate also is derived from fear. A lot of the hate that many white uneducated southern people had against black people after slavery ended came from fear. They feared they were going to lose their jobs to the blacks because the majority of slaves were uneducated as well and free to compete for jobs amongst uneducated whites.

[...] the atrocious treatment of Native Americans during the coming of westward expansion would also prove to be a tragic and grievous national stain. And as the nineteenth century lumbered forward, there remained an old deep Know-Nothing streak of nativism, a virulent mix of black haters, catholic haters, Jew haters, and immigrant haters. (Winik 382)

Fear of those who are different was the theme for most European Americans hating people during times of early settlement of America. European Americans were not the first to settle in America; the Native Americans had been living on the land for years. Once the Europeans occupied the land, they took over dominating the native Indians as well as all other races that followed. Most of these white men were not open to accepting diversity; they wanted everybody to be like them. They hated the majority of immigrants coming to America who were different from them. The Chinese immigrants are a good example of people the Europeans hated.

The Chinese came to the west along with other immigrants in hopes of a better life. Many Chinese found themselves discriminated against and treated badly by the white Americans because they were too different. Nita Howard, a History professor at Clovis Community College, informed me of how Chinese women were lured to come to America under false pretenses and were forced into prostitution once they arrived. In my opinion, the European Americans treated the Chinese and all others differently only because of the inability to explain the myths associated with difference; they hated them only because they feared that getting to

know 'those people' would challenge their own ethnocentric views of how 'normal' people should be like them.

Poverty seems to make people more ready to pull together and blame their misfortunes on other groups of people. It also causes people to have strong emotions to hate more readily. This is due to people being desperate and upset because they are not able to provide for themselves and their families as well as they did when things were going well. Hate derived from poverty is common and demonstrated throughout history to include: German Nazis' hate for Jews was due to Germany's economy falling and people having to deal with poverty, and many Southern whites' hate for Northerners was due to the south's falling economy after the Civil War – they too had to deal with poverty. Both the Germans and Southern whites were facing bad times and dealing with poverty. Both blamed others for their misfortune and pulled together as a unit to build unity against the cause of their misfortune. A majority of the German community united against the Jews and a majority of white Southerners united against the Northerners.

Hate can be learned or derived from other emotions

Some people learn hate from their family and other groups of people who glorify hating people of different races or religions. The Ku Klux Klan is a white supremacy group that teaches hate to its members. Many of the Klan's members are using the internet to preach hate to youth today. "With the help of Internet technology and cyberspace marketing, once decrepit hate organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan are regaining their youthful energy and competing for the attention of increasingly educated audiences" (Brown 1). There are children who learned to hate other people from their parents, but when they grow up and start experiencing different types of people on their own, they realize their parents were wrong and begin to change their views.

While my husband was attending tech school in the military, he met a young white male who had been taught to hate black people by his parents. The young white male's view of blacks start-

ed to change once he began to interact with my husband and other blacks attending the tech school. The young white male became good friends with my husband. The young man also began to question everything his parents taught him; he became upset with his parents and confronted them on these issues.

Hate can derive from other emotions. Jealousy is an emotion that can turn into hate. Cain became jealous of his little brother Abel when God praised Abel for giving his very best offerings and God talked badly about Cain for not giving his very best offerings. Cain became jealous and began to hate Abel so much he killed him (Genesis 9: 18-27).

Media's influence on hate

"Incitement is a hallmark of genocide, and it may be a prerequisite for it" ("Inciting Genocide, Pleading Free Speech" 4). The best way to spread hate is through the media. If hate can be advertised, it will bring people of a majority together as a group with a common cause to channel their hate toward a minority, especially in times of poverty. This is the point when hate goes too far because people are most vulnerable in hard times. The media played a key role in promoting hate to go too far in the past. There are instances around the world where people used the media to promote hate for particular ethnic groups and races. This led people to wipe out a whole race or ethnic group by committing genocide, the killing of an entire race or ethnic group. Genocide is a good example of hate going way too far. This happened in Germany where Hitler was able to promote hate for the Jews through use of media and propaganda. Hitler was able to influence and manipulate many Nazi troops to carry out malicious acts and kill millions of Jews using the media.

The genocide acts against the Tutsis in Rwanda (Africa) were also a media influence. The media instigated and urged the Hutus to take their feelings of hate and kill over 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Radio announcers gave out names and license plates of Tutsis to be killed. The media also encouraged hate through a Hutu-owned Rwandan tabloid by coining the term "cockroaches" to refer to the Tutsis' ethnic group. ("Inciting Genocide, Pleading Free Speech")

In conclusion

Mythology, fear, poverty, and the media influence hate. It is not always used in its true sense and can be used without malice. For example, teaching a child to have strong feelings of “hate” for illegal drugs rather than a dislike could have a greater impact in detouring children away from illegal drugs. It’s obvious that when people hate something they despise, they are less likely to try it. Even though “hate” should always be checked, it doesn’t have to be a bad thing when good behavior is at issue.

Hate can be used without malice. People say they hate someone or something on a daily basis to express that they are feeling hurt or upset or to voice their dislikes. When the word “hate” is said after a lovers’ quarrel, for example, it is said out of spite to make the other person feel just as hurt or upset. Another example: when a person says s/he hates vegetables, s/he is using the word as meaning “a serious distaste.” But in these contexts, people use the word when they are referring to things they really only dislike. Real hate is a learned emotion and a by-product of other emotions such as jealousy. Hate is a strong emotion a person can have and its power is most devastating when people unite in large numbers to torment others and/or contribute to mass killing. This is when hate has gone too far.

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*The Deadline for publication
in the Spring 2006 issue is
February 30, 2006.*

WHICH WITCH?

JESSICA MESSER

July 26, 2004

"Welcome to another year at Hogwarts." I can just imagine Dumbledore's kind voice resonating in the Great Hall. Children, teenagers, and young adults all over the world have been captivated by this collection of magical stories. We call them *Harry Potter*. Not only children, teens, and young adults, but older adults have fallen in love with the students and teachers at Hogwarts. The epic battle of good versus evil has once again prevailed to capture our attention and to inspire our imaginations. The struggles of a young boy to fit in while finding his own identity appeals to many readers and viewers. Kimbra Wilder Gish said, "I don't find it difficult to sympathize with Harry's overwhelming emotional confusion..." (par. 22). The enchanted world of this one little boy, Harry Potter, has sparked enthusiasts and opponents everywhere.

Like most things, achieving great success does not occur without great criticism. Many opponents of the *Harry Potter* craze have been parents and teachers who do not feel that the principles found in the books encourage good moral behavior. They believe that children may learn to see occultic or satanic practices as acceptable:

In our faith [Christian], the spiritual education of children is considered crucial... Because those of my faith believe that casual exposure to the occult through media sources such as television, movies, games, and books can desensitize a Christian to the sinful nature of such beliefs and practices, any exposure is commonly prohibited. This includes reading books that portray the occult in a positive light. (Gish par. 7)

Why, then, is it acceptable for children to watch television shows and movies and read books where the characters lie, cheat, steal and idolize things or people? Why is it that if the characters practice magic instead, it is not acceptable? Why all of a sudden does *Harry Potter* have to take the wrap for sparking a nation full of kids to take up witch-

craft? Honestly, *Harry Potter's* 'immoral' contexts are no worse than those of other media geared towards children.

My sister, who happens to be sixteen years old, is one of the millions of people who are captivated by the magical world of this one Harry Potter. I must say that I am completely jealous that she has found something that enralls her the way these books do. She knew the exact day each new installment came out, and was there on the very day to pick up her reserved copy. Her excitement over reading the books is only amplified as she talks with her friends who also adore reading about Harry and his classmates.

With the media and many social and religious groups having such mixed opinions, I questioned whether or not my still young, impressionable sister should be spending so much time reading and watching these things. Again my thoughts revert back to one: what makes *Harry Potter* any worse than the other books that we read? These books that we are reading are not just books we have chosen to read, but books that have been assigned for us to read. *The Scarlet Letter*, based on the story of an adulteress, seems no worse in my eyes than a book about a boy using magic.

Harry Potter is by no means the first book or movie about witches, wizards, and warlocks. Television shows such as Disney's "That's So Raven," Warner Brother's "Charmed," and the American Broadcast Company's "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" all depict youthful characters with supernatural powers conjuring up spirits, chanting spells, and brewing potions. Forgive me, but being a psychic is not a "gift" that should be considered moral, is it? And for that matter, Sabrina does not always use her powers for good. More than that, her magical aunts do not always encourage her to utilize those powers for moral purposes. I am not belittling any of these shows because quite frankly they are entertaining. I am, however, saying that *Harry Potter* should not get more grief than any of these or similar shows.

Harry Potter is not the only book targeted towards youth that has "offensive" content in it. Looking at the American Library Association's list of "The 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of

1990-2000," I found *Harry Potter* to be ranked number seven (Office for Intellectual Freedom...). What was truly appalling was that several of the books on the list are books considered to be American classics. Books like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* written by Mark Twain and *The Giver* written by Lois Lowry are books that I not only was encouraged to read as an elementary student, but are a couple among several that I was required to read. A few others that made it to the list are *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

The freedom of press and the freedom to read are liberties that no one should take lightly. If a book is written well and it is interesting, read it. "The true magic of Harry Potter isn't the magic taught at Hogwarts – it is the magic that the books bring to a reader's life" (Gish par. 24). If a child will sit for hours and read a book, let he(r) read. Most kids nowadays want to spend their time playing video games. While there is nothing wrong with video games, reading stimulates the brain and the imagination, and the imagination, in most cases, is wonderful to have. As English teacher Sharon Black stated, "... I have noticed consistently that [Harry] Potter books have a wonderful capacity to draw us in through the power of imagination" (par. 4). Imagination is, in my opinion, the first thing adults lose as they age; the place where children can get lost in a different world for a while is being compromised by the loss of creativity in adults' minds. A sprinkle of pixie dust never hurt Wendy or any of the "lost boys" when they went to Neverland for a little while. And although Harry and Ron had a hard-hitting experience at platform 9¾ (Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), the adventures all turn out the same. Forget the witchcraft part of the book and focus on the imagination. Let a kid get lost for a few hours in their own little world, even if it takes them to Hogwarts to be one of Harry and Ron's classmates. "A Whole New World" is something that we can all use to go to every once in a while.

The appearance of innocence is what clears the other movies and other media containing these fantasy worlds from the war-zone of opposition. Eglantine Price in *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* appears to be innocent when compared to

Professor McGonagall and Professor Snape. Aladdin stumbles upon a genie, and as far fetched as the movie might seem, kids believe it and find comfort in the magical wonders of it. *The Wizard of Oz* is another movie that gives kids a release from the real world for a little while. Not only does it allow for a release, but it paints witches in both a negative and a positive light. The wizard was also portrayed as a good man. What is the big difference? The difference is that people make themselves think what they want to think about a particular subject.

A person's faith has a big deal to do with the way s/he views this issue. Faith is subjective, quite comparable to interpretation. Each individual sees an object differently as s/he wants to. Often these observations differ dramatically. As Gish states in her article, "... denominations vary on how strictly they apply their beliefs to children's reading" (Gish par. 11). If one chooses not to let their child partake in reading or watching *Harry Potter*, my only question would be, what are the criteria that make Harry more offensive than Sabrina or Raven? Why is Halloween Town from Disney's movie less insulting than Hogwarts? "Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself" (Rowling, *The Sorcerer's Stone* 298). Dumbledore put it so very well.

Why do parents and teachers seem so afraid of *Harry Potter*? If parents inform their children of what is right and what is wrong, what is the trouble? Kids must choose for themselves what they want to read, ultimately. If a parent forbids a book like *Harry Potter* from their child, there is a strong possibility that they will pick up the book at school or from a friend who is already intrigued by the stories. Do we as a society really want to have a



Gina L Hochhalter

life modeled after the one in the book *The Giver*, a life where there is no emotion, no happiness? If that's the case, we might as well drop the verdict on ourselves now.

Raising children with morals that are correct is an important responsibility. Instead of blaming *Harry Potter*, however, we must be committed to raising our kids to know between right and wrong. Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (King James Version). The same way we address the fact that lying and cheating are wrong is the same way we need to teach that although it looks and sounds fun in the books and on the movies, witchcraft is not a game and not something that should be taken lightly.

Harry Potter may seem like the problem, but people were taking up immoral practices long before the thought of Hogwarts was ever brought about. In the real world, there is far more killing, sexual immorality, and stealing than problems of witchcraft. Until we stop children from viewing all of the other "bad" stuff, *Harry Potter* should not be singled out for its references to immoral things. Not only that, but do not single out *Harry Potter* as being wrong just because it conveys to children that witchcraft is good because this paper has shown that there are several movies and shows that contain the same theme. Harry Potter is just another young man trying to find himself in this big world. Leave the poor boy alone. He already gets enough from his own family.

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PAGANS, POTTER, AND PROBLEMS: CHRISTIANITY'S PROBLEM WITH THE OCCULT AND WHY *HARRY POTTER* IS NOT A WITCHCRAFT MANUAL

CHRISTINA CROSS

July 24, 2003

Conservative religious groups are trying to ban *Harry Potter* from schools and libraries, saying that the portrayal of witchcraft is not something they want their children exposed to; but if they are successful, there will be many other kids who will not have access to the books. Limiting everyone's exposure to material just because it is not conducive to the Christian belief system is not the answer. Shouldn't people want their children to be knowledgeable of all the information out there and then make a conscious, aware choice to follow the parent's belief system? Why would they want blind obedience without true belief based on education and study? Once these children reach an age wherein they are capable of comprehending the many abstract concepts involved in religion, they should be allowed to learn about alternate religious views. Open-minded scrutiny of all the available information is the best way to make an informed decision about what is "right" or "wrong" for each person. Without that knowledge we have nothing but an empty "because that is what I was told" answer when someone asks, "Why?"

The controversy behind *Harry Potter* seems to be uniquely American in source, and this phenomenon is what we are going to look at. The somewhat radical ethnocentrism that seems to be sweeping across America could destroy the freedom of expression and thought that is a core value of our country if care is not taken to prevent it. Just because one person or group does not believe

in something should not mean that all people should be restricted from it. The portrayal of witchcraft in *Harry Potter* is a far cry from real witchcraft. For those religious groups that have a problem with the sorcery and divination written about in the books, this fact should make a huge difference. The magic that they believe is real and therefore a substantial threat to the moral upbringing of their children is nothing like the fictional magic done by Harry and his friends.

American religious groups and individuals are challenging these books based on their religious objections to their portrayal of magic. Christians (especially Evangelical) believe that magic and witches are real threats to their religion based on scriptures from the Bible that prohibit interaction with such things:

⁹"When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations. ¹⁰There shall not be found among you any one who maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or who useth divination, or an observer of times or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. ¹²For all who do these things are an abomination unto the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. (Deut. 18:9-12)

This basically means that according to God, anyone who is an enchanter, witch, wizard, etc. is an abomination to the Lord, and HIS people better not consort with them. The problem with this is that there is no mention of what God means by these terms; no attempt is made to define them for the reader. This leaves a wide range of interpretations for the many people who use the Bible as a guide. There are many other Biblical scriptures that specifically mention wizards and witchcraft, such as Leviticus 19:31, Isaiah 8:19, Isaiah 19:3, 2 Kings 21:6, 2 Kings 23:24, and 2 Chronicles 33:6. Revelation 21:8, and Galatians 5:19-21; these passages do not just casually mention wizards and witches as bad people, but they put sorcerers and witchcraft in the same category as murderers, whoremongers, and adulterers among others.

The kind of magic portrayed in *Harry Potter* is **not** based on real witchcraft as many of these peo-

ple portend. To some it doesn't matter; any and all forms of "supernatural" powers are considered evil and an abomination to God, the only *true* supernatural force to Christians. They are more militant with their concerns, saying that **any** book that shows witchcraft is taboo, while others say it depends on how it is portrayed within the book, whether it is shown as acceptable or not (Gish pars. 8, 10). If, for instance, the characters learned a lesson, that messing with witchcraft is wrong, or if Witches were shown as evil creatures, then the book might be acceptable to them. *Harry Potter*, of course, shows neither of these things; their lessons in wizardry take place as part of everyday life in their world.

The Reverend Douglas Taylor of the Oneness Pentecostal Church states that "Harry Potter is repackaged witchcraft... our ministry is not going to remain quiet. Our heads are not buried in a smoking caldron [sic], and we're going to be doing something about it." He and a small conservative clergy group who call the success of *Harry Potter* "a glorification of sorcery" insist that Satan inspired the series and intends to fight him (qtd. in MacQuarrie pars. 6-7, 12). There are, however, many religious people who see no problem with *Harry Potter* and actually find the books great for children as they have strong moral content with a triumph of good over evil. Many of these people agree that the books can be a bit dark and perhaps should be limited to certain ages, but that the overall good of the books outweighs any negative aspects. They say that the books do not factually depict the occult and therefore will not be teaching children about it (Maudlin par. 13). This would indicate that many of these people accept *Harry Potter* as a work of fantasy that encourages their children to read, and that it should not be judged based on factors that aren't really accurate. The true occult – that which is hidden or secret – is in some people's minds closely associated with the magic of *Harry Potter*, but it doesn't come close to the fictitious magic in these books.

Wicca, Witchcraft, and Paganism are nature religions, just a few of many. The term *witch* is commonly used to mean someone who practices Wicca. Wicca is a religion based on the old nature religions of Europe; most Wiccans worship Gods and/or Goddesses as aspects of *nature*, not necessarily as an actual higher being. "The word

Witchcraft comes from the Old English *wicce* and *wicca*, referring to female and male practitioners, respectively" (Adier 11). There are numerous ideas as to where these terms derived and what the meaning was of the original word. Some say that it is derived from the Indo-European roots "wic" or "weik" meaning to bend or turn. The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* also says the word *witch* is derived from the Indo-European root word "weik" but that it has to do with religion and magic, which differs from "weik," to bend.

Most participants actually define Witchcraft as the "Craft of the wise." It is also called Wisecraft or Wiccacraft, partly due to the fact that the old Witches were, most of the time, the healers of the village, the midwives, wise people, and followers of the practical arts (Adier 11). There are many more variations in the theory of where the words came from and what the root word meant, enough to do a whole paper on that topic alone!

Some Wiccans do practice magick – the spelling difference is to distinguish it from standard magicians' feats of illusion – while others don't. Their form of magick is based on rituals and the focusing of energy to *possibly* help make something happen. "Magic, the art of sensing and shaping the subtle, unseen forces that flow through the world, of awakening deeper levels of consciousness beyond the rational, is an element common to all traditions of Witchcraft. Craft rituals are magical rites: they stimulate an awareness of the hidden side of reality, and awaken long-forgotten powers of the human mind" (Starhawk 27). Therefore, magick can be defined for most Pagan practitioners as techniques used to focus the mind and imagination, visualizing the effect he or she wants to occur, and keeping a focus on that goal, using the natural forces in the world as a conduit. There is no waving of wands and chanting incantations to produce an instantaneous physical change as occurs in *Harry Potter*.

Scott Cunningham in *Wicca, A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*, defines ritual as: "A specific form of movement, manipulation of objects or series of inner processes designed to produce desired effects." He says that these rituals are to strengthen the Wiccan's relationship with their

Goddess, God, and the earth (47). The rituals, and the candles, wands, athames (two-sided ceremonial knives used to direct or focus energy), chants, words, or "spells" used in these rituals are all tools to help maintain the mind's focus on the intended goal. They usually occur on nights of the Full Moon and during the Eight Days of Power that are the old agricultural and seasonal festivals of Europe and are usually spiritual in nature (Cunningham 47). Rituals are extremely personal in nature and can have any format that makes the person comfortable or happy. They vary tremendously from person to person in the order of events and in the wording of the 'quarter calls' (the four elements are associated with the four main compass points), invocations, and chants. Rituals typically start with 'casting a circle' which is the means of creating the sacred space. After this, it is a matter of personal preference, but most participants call on the four elements of Earth (North), Air (East), Fire (South), and Water (West): they also call on the Goddess and God to be present. They can then perform the specialized ritual for the holiday, or their magick, whatever the purpose of the ritual was to be. They thank the God and Goddess for their attendance and release the elements, and then release the circle. There can be cakes and ale, or cookies and juice, served to the participants who talk amongst each other. Sounds like a tea party to me!

Contrast this to the way Harry, Hermione, Ron, and the rest work magic and I think you can readily see the difference. They wave their wands in specific ways and use predetermined spells to work their magic; they all use the same gestures and words or it doesn't work correctly. This is shown again and again in the children's classes, when humorous accidents occur as a result of saying the word incorrectly or using an improper flick of the wrist when waving the wand. Try waving a wand, chanting a spell, and see what happens! Probably not much of anything.

Basically, the fact is that Wicca or Witchcraft bears only the slightest superficial resemblance to the magic in *Harry Potter*, and that is only in some very small areas such as divination. The religious fanatics who claim that Satan is the source for the material in *Harry Potter* are mistaken. In this work

of fiction, J.K. Rowling has not created God or Devil figures; her world has no mention of the occult as it is understood by real participants. She has stated repeatedly that she is a Christian, has no involvement with the occult, and that the books were written as a fantasy story. In any event, Wiccans do not believe in the all-good Christian God, so they have no need for an all-evil counterpart to him. There are good and evil in ALL people and things, duality in nature is readily observable, and this duality includes the Gods and Goddesses.

Satanism and Paganism are *entirely* different, and Wiccans are very offended when they are told by Christians that they worship the Devil. They do not believe in Satan and therefore are not empowered by him. There are many Christians who take that statement as proof of just how depraved the Pagans are, and say that this disbelief is how Satan works. Christians, however, will not acknowledge that Pagans have an *entirely different belief system* and can not be judged by the Christian Bible or its precepts. A person has to believe that the Bible speaks the truth to be bound by it; according to the Wiccan, you have to believe in the Christian God and the Devil to be held under their power.

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EFFECTS OF STANDARDIZED TESTING

DANIEL R. GREGG

Raising children is complicated to say the least. Knowing what, when and how to teach them has always been a riddle among parents. So, from mental exhaustion, parents have turned to the Educational System for assistance. Today, schools have progressed (or digressed) from allowing teachers to dictate what and how they teach to what they will teach as a minimum requirement for students proceeding to the next grade level. Standardized Tests have derived meaning behind cumulative grading. Are these tests actually in the best interests of the students or is it another way to keep control over the learning of our young ones?

"Until Standardization, a prime example of breeding conformity, is stopped and individuality is observed, the administration will continue to oppress and stomp out all that is different, killing the views of free society" (Riley par. 7). If everyone were conditioned to be the same, then sure, standardized tests would work beautifully. However, we are not this "perfect" Utopian society.

We are free thinkers and this type of testing cripples that behavior. Instead of going into an in-depth explanation over a student's question of "why," the answer will be "because it is on the test." In this situation, the amount of knowledge an individual must retain for an entire year would be absurd. Not to mention the fact that not everyone excels in taking a monstrous comprehensive multiple choice exam. Even college level students dread that final exam at the end of a semester. And their educational experience is far superior to that of a student in grade school.

In order for students to achieve average results on standardized tests, teachers have to teach exactly what will be on the test. This doesn't allow for tangents on interesting subjects which thus hinders that "free thinking" ability. All subjects are at a grave disadvantage if a student's mind isn't afforded the benefit to roam between each, such as wondering how mathematics affects science. Or, seeing how and understanding why history indeed repeats itself. Instead of designing each class around the students, teachers have to design each class around the tests, which keeps students at the same level of learning and doesn't allow them to excel beyond that. According to James, "[s]tandardized tests don't engage students' sense of curiosity" (131).

Justin James also states, "It is no wonder my



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niece says school is boring" (131). I will admit, boredom surely follows standardized testing. Boredom follows anything an individual isn't interested in. With that in mind, the tests shouldn't be solely blamed for this disadvantage.

In one of my early pieces, I argued that it is the teachers' responsibility to stray the student away from being bored and keep them interested ("Enlighten Me" 1). Now, there seem to be many factors which can lead to boredom within a student, and the teacher isn't necessarily one of them. Although standardized testing seems to narrow the knowledge needing to be learned, it isn't the basis for boredom within a classroom. The students themselves, since it's their boredom, play a significant role. If students take the boring material and use it in something they find interesting the problem might take a reverse role. Parents should also involve themselves within their child's academic studies. If parents aid in the understanding of what material is being presented, perhaps the student can apply it to something not so boring. The imagination is a great thing when it isn't wasted.

Standardized Testing is a good idea as long as it is being used as a measuring tool to improve the current curriculum. It can certainly show areas where students overall are having difficulty. The School Board can then take measures to improve each individual course as needed. By approaching the educational process this way, it allows the building of a stronger educational foundation thus benefiting the student dramatically. Of course that is if everyone plays the role they are given: the teacher teaches, the student learns, and the parents aid the learners. This doesn't mean for them (the parents) to complete their child's homework as Nancy Gibbs stated, "[t]he parent argued every point in the essay... [i]t became apparent that she'd written it" (40).

Another attribute for standardized testing is allowing for advanced placement. Unfortunately, this is only an advantage on an individual basis. Students progressing in their academic studies are afforded the opportunity to excel. Mike Rose made the comparison of grades being scientific data, some sort of spectroscopic data that he had made something of value ("I Just Wanna Be Average" 390). Without a system to be measured, how can individual achievement possibly be determined?

On the reverse, how do slower learning students excel? This is where standardization forces that crippling effect. It doesn't afford slower learning students to make their own connection between what is being taught and personal experiences.

The mind is a very fragile and delicate instrument. It is our individual right to become a free thinker. Unless we are able to grasp a greater concept than what is being taught, the free thinkers of the world will soon diminish. Interested and curious individuals, with a passion for learning, have defined our educational past and will further define our educational future. Standardized testing proves to be a fine line that must be walked. As long as the mind isn't kept inside a dark tunnel, standardized testing shouldn't keep this civilization from growing academically. Only the future will determine if ultimate standardization is in the best interests of the students.

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Perspectives

Articles or essays of controversy are one of Palabras's favorite pastimes. If you'd like to write a refutation or an alternate perspective to any article herein, please do.



ODE TO MOVING

DENISE JONES AND FRIENDS

Mom you need to move NOW!
Bring in the lawn furniture for the winter.
Obstacle course motif is hip.
Rule of thumb
If you ain't used it in a year toss over the balcony.

Seeking whom to give your treasures to is a trip.
Wondering if they will enjoy them is a test.
Should I or shouldn't I seems to be the question!
Who's to say enough is enough already?
Certainly not I!

It's time for a break here!
Good-bye parking lot.
Good-bye tree, you're my dearest protection.
Good-bye beautiful lake of missing cars.
Good-bye playground and many hours of fun.
Oh no I'm going to cry!

Assortments of what dear!
Shoes of several seasons,
Quilts from years ago,
Pillows for comfort,
And away we go just the two of us.
Where will it be?

Moving sucks!
Too much stuff!
Moving is great, I like moving everywhere!
Good-bye boot knockers.
Good-bye door ringers.
Hello screen doors!
Oh dear, it is time to finish the Christmas cards
I SAID NOW DEAR!

